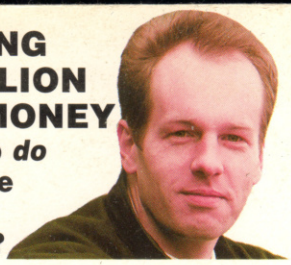
8 PAGES PACKED WITH TIPS!
Rainbow Islands complete guide! Starts on page 53

TURNING REBELLION INTO MONEY
Just who *do* Renegade think they are?



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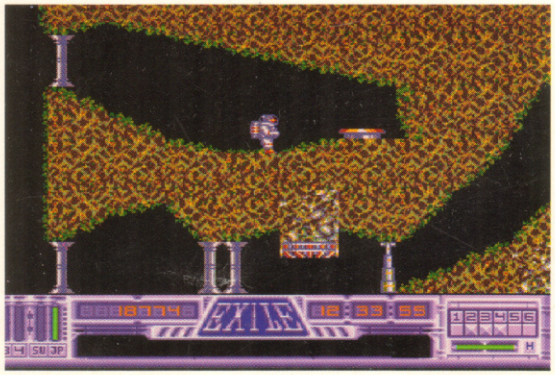
ISSUE 1 £2.95 MAY 1991

NEW!

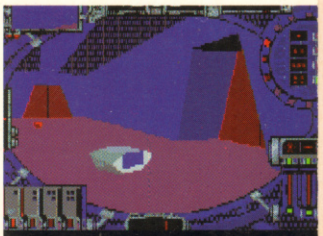
FROM THE MAKERS OF ***AMIGA FORMAT***, A MAGAZINE WITH *ATTITUDE*

AMIGA POWER



FROM NOWHERE
The future of arcade adventures sneaks in through the back door

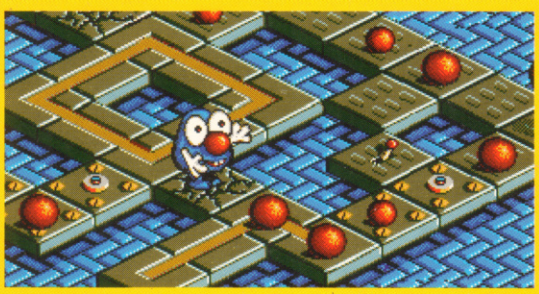
MORE GAMES MORE STYLE
Unmissable reviews of over 40 new games!



CYBERCON 3
The quest for perfect solid 3D continues...

LOOK!
COMPLETE GAME

QUICK! FLICK TO PAGE 5 FOR FULL DETAILS! →

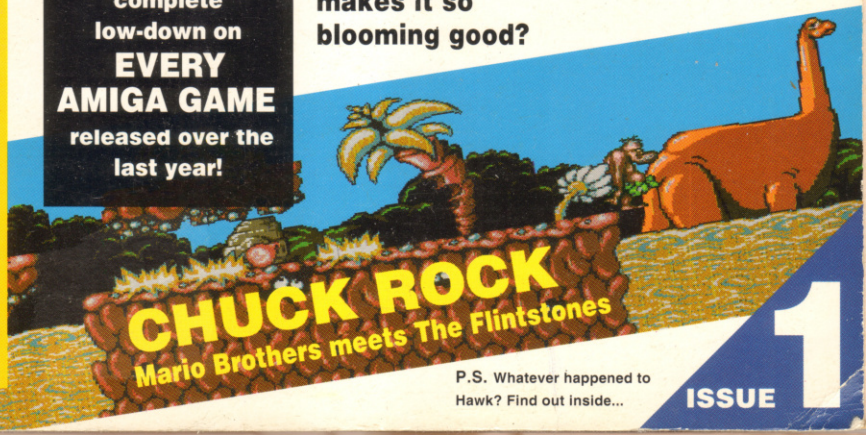


BOMBUZAL IMAGE WORKS
250 LEVELS OF CLASSIC PUZZLING!
A COMPLETE GAME selected from the *AMIGA POWER* All-Time Top 100 Games.
NEVER RELEASED ON BUDGET!
If you can't see your copy of Bombuzal stuck here ask your newsagent now!

ALL-TIME top GAMES

RAILROAD TYCOON
Sounds awful, looks dull – so what makes it so blooming good?

CLASSIC OR TURKEY?
Don't miss the complete low-down on **EVERY AMIGA GAME** released over the last year!



CHUCK ROCK
Mario Brothers meets The Flintstones

P.S. Whatever happened to Hawk? Find out inside...

ISSUE 1

WIN! THE ENTIRE AMIGA POWER ALL-TIME TOP 100 GAMES! Over £2000 of great software!

GOING OVE

NARC The arcade action thriller with the BIG finish. Infiltrate the criminal underworld - your mission is to seek out and destroy the king pin of the MR BIG CORPORATION - if you get that far.

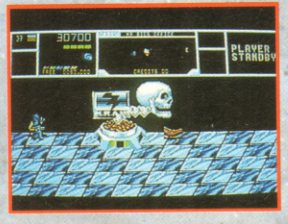
You'll have to outwit his enormous army of body guards... gangs of charisma-bypass patients in trench coats, the bullet brain with the build of a rhinoceros and the breath of a dung beetle, packs of vicious canine yappies, the psychotic clown with an evil sense of humour - you'll die, but not laughing! Then there's the gas guzzling cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door rail, a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away as he rolls down main street leaving you coughing lead. It's not all bad!... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean, shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I say he was Mr. Big? No, he's MR BIG!

The Arcade thriller takes you from the bright lights of Paris to the rugged terrain of the Sahara. Your mission is to track down, chase and apprehend the dangerous criminals.

It's FASTER - explosive power sends you bulleting through various terrains - hold the line or plough the fields! It's TOUGHER - the criminals wield some heavy hardware - but so do you! You can shoot but you must dodge their flak... heavy gunfire, trucks unloading their cargo onto your bonnet... it's the meanest pursuit game to hit the micro screen.

The extra features will leave you gasping for extended play weather changes, bodyguard squads, grenade lobbing bikers, gun-choppers... just play it!... we dare you to stop!

FOR THE BEST IN S



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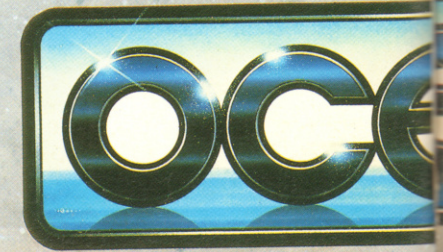

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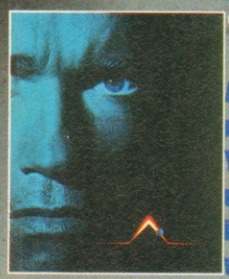

TOTAL RECALL

As Doug Quaid you have been haunted by recurring dreams of another life on Mars. You are drawn to Rekall Incorporated, a unique travel service specializing in implanting fantasies into the minds of those who desire to turn their dreams into reality. THE EGO TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Experience the horror as your dreams turn into hideous nightmares. Suddenly your every move is monitored by would-be assasins. You discover the surreal truth -

You're not you - you're me.

You must travel to Mars to discover your true identity - your mission is now a journey of non-stop action, strange mutants, futuristic vehicles and a startling array of weaponry all captured in superbly executed graphics and a game play that compliments the success of the year's top movie.

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ROBOCOP 2

EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

The future is a rough place Detroit is a bankrupt city...torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of Robocop!

Robocop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value. Detroit Is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together!

HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT

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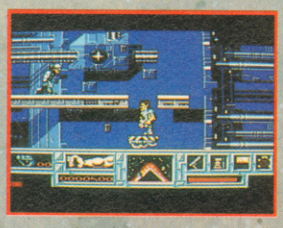
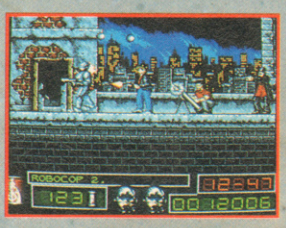
SOFTWARE ACTION





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No thanks at all to:
Bob Wade & the Amiga Shopper team (who made launching a new mag look so bloody easy).

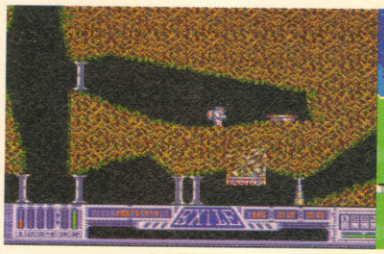
Good luck to: Julie Stuckes, Sally Meddings, Helen Carey & everybody else who's in the same boat. You've only got yourselves to blame!

COMPETITION: Send us something neat made out of folded paper (as long as it's not a hat or a plane – we know how to make those already). The best one will win a free game hand-picked by us from all the ones we reviewed this month. And no, it won't be one of the really really crap ones!

NEXT ISSUE: The fabulous June issue of Amiga Power, which again will come complete with an All-Time Top 100 game stuck to the front, will reach the shops on or around Thursday, May 23rd. Order your copy now! (Or better still – take out a subscription. They really are incredibly good value, you know!)

20–50 GAMES OF THE MONTH

Not necessarily the best games of the month (in terms of whether they've got the highest marks or not) but certainly the most *interesting*. Amiga Power's flexible reviewing system allows everything the space it needs, be it two pages on a simple (but nonetheless jolly good) arcade romp like *Chuck Rock*, or up to five (!) on something a bit more complicated...



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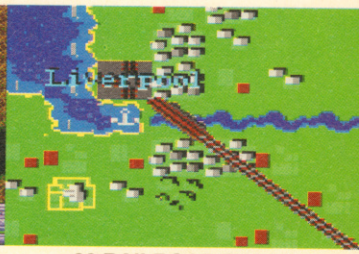
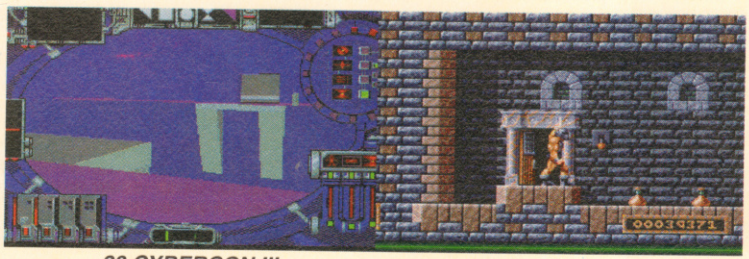


30 RAILROAD TYCOON



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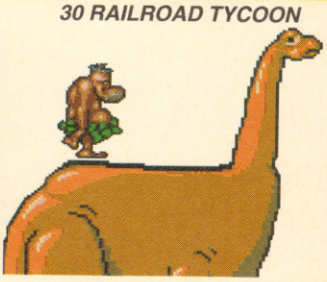


32 CHUCK ROCK

53 COMPLETE CONTROL

Page after page of hints and tips to give you Complete Control over your games. This month, overdose on the biggest, bestest Player's Guide to *Rainbow Islands* you've ever seen. (Plus lots

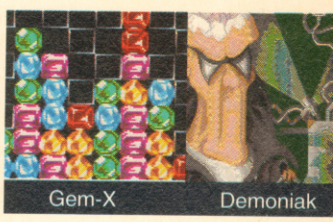
66 What game do you *really* wish you'd written?(And why?)

70 Renegade & The Bitmaps – what now? (And what next?)

99 WIN! THE AMIGA POWER ALL-TIME TOP 100 GAMES!

80-96 AMIGA POWE

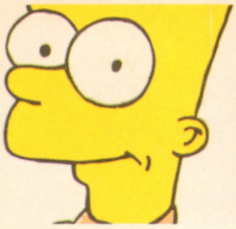
Every new game that didn't quite make the Games Of The Month section reviewed, be it full-price or budget. Good, bad or ugly, if it's released this month it'll be covered in the most fearless review section around...



105-110 THE BOTTOM LINE

Amiga Power's unique reference guide – six pages packed to overflowing with mini-reviews of every significant full price Amiga game released over the past year. Classics, turkeys and in-betweenies (*lots* of in-betweenies) – you'll find them all here!

Amiga Power comes to you from Future Publishing, the name behind all the best computer magazines (and a couple of others that don't have computers in at all). Ready for the full list? Good, cos they are Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, Commodore Format, Your Sinclair, Amstrad Action, New Computer Express, Sega Power, PC Plus, PC Answers (which hasn't come out yet), 8000 Plus, MacPublishing, Classic CD and Needlecraft. (I think that deserves a 'Hurrah!', don't you?) © Future Publishing 1991



10 TRUE STORIES

News, gossip, interviews, compos, and the Gallup charts. If it's happening in Amiga games it's happening in True Stories...

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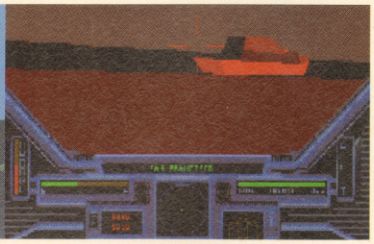

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POWER FEATURES

Interviews, opinion, Work In Progress features and more – the middle of the Amiga Power will bring you things never seen before in computer magazines. And it all starts with the bits over on the left there...

WER GAMES

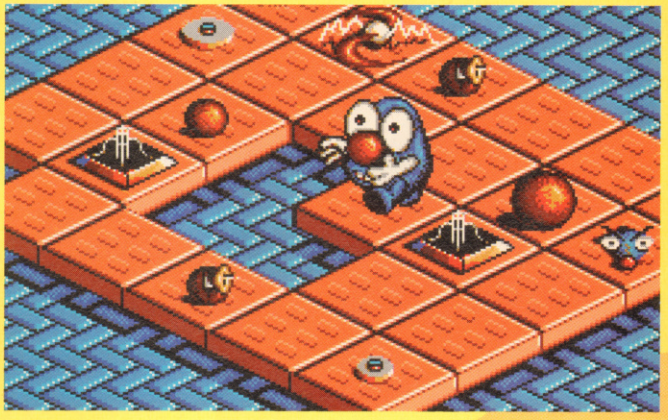
Famous Five | The Power | Arborea | Excalibur

112 IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

Our regular back page feature, where famous industry types look back on their past work and admit where they went wrong. This month, Peter Molyneux of Bullfrog talks about *Flood*, *Powermonger*, and this little thing called *Populous*...

EVERY MONTH Amiga Power carries a demo-packed disk stuck to the cover. Normally, that is – to kick off with it's all a little bit special...

disk ONE



AND THIS IS BOMBUZAL

That's right! To get the ball rolling we're actually giving away complete games on the first two issues - and not just any old games, either. No, these are titles picked from the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100, and as such guaranteed absolutely exceptional! This month it's *Bombuzal*, the famous puzzle game, and – to make sure you get the most out of it – the next few pages present a complete Player's Guide put together by by the fair hand of the inimitable Gary Penn...

You'll have heard of this Tony Crowther classic of course – if only for the fact that so many top programmers, including the likes of John Ritman, Jeff Minter and Andrew Braybrook, all had a go at designing screens for the thing. With that sort of pedigree it has to be good – and it is – earning rave reviews when it first came out. It's never been released on budget either, which makes it effectively a complete full-price game you're getting here. Now sit down and get comfy – here's your chance to see what all the fuss was about...

(Count 'em!) World Wars!

There's nothing big or hard or clever or grown up about blowing things up. But – and let's just make it perfectly clear that this is providing you're not risking any lives – it can be fun. Not that there's much of an outlet these days for such an (ahem) explosive pastime.

Until now, that is. For here's a simulation of sorts that's pure dynamite. Yes, *Bombuzal* is a boombastic arcade style puzzler that's simply bomb-believable!

And what's *Bombuzal* got? It's got...

*** BANG! More Get Up And Go-a Than Krakatoa!**
*** BLAM! More Kerpow! Than T'Pau!**
*** BOOM! More Force Than Two**

In other words, there are rather a lot of explosions in it. There's also rather a lot of fun. So without further ado, let's get down to the nitty gritty of playing the game...

ONTO THE GAME PROPER...

In *Bombuzal* there are hundreds of explosive situations (levels to you and me) to defuse. Each task centres around a floating platform built from tiles, some of which support bombs or other explosive devices, others which sport other, erm, things. (We'll get onto what they all do in good time). It's up to you – or a friend, for this exercise can involve a second player – to destroy →

disk ONE

all the bombs found on each level without getting yourself blown to kingdom come in the process. To do so you control a little blue, blobby character, whose sole task in life seems to be a very crude form of bomb disposal – there's no defusing things in this game, the only way you get rid of something is to blow it up.

BOMB DISPOSAL

Bombuzal has two different types of explosive device: Mines and Bombs. Both come in different sizes, and both types must be destroyed to complete a level.

The size of a bomb (or mine) determines its blast radius – basically how many tiles in its vicinity it's capable of destroying. When a bomb (or mine) explodes, any other bomb (or mine) within its blast radius is detonated too. In this way complex chain reactions occur and can used to your advantage when it comes to clearing a site. (It also means that if you don't take a bit of care you could blow yourself up quite happily).

Mines are easy to spot – and detonate for that matter. Simply step onto a tile bearing a mine and BOOM! It's game over time – you're dead. The only safe way to set off a mine is by triggering it with an adjacent explosion.

Bombs, on the other hand, are a different ketttle of fusion. Every bomb has a three-second fuse, and pressing the firebutton while standing on top of the bomb starts the countdown, while releasing the firebutton before zero is reached aborts the countdown and resets the fuse. The bomb won't actually go off until you step off the tile on which it resides, so it's no big problem if the counter reaches zero and you're standing right over the bomb.

Don't push your luck though – before you set one off, make sure the bomb's small enough that you'll be able to get out of the blast area in time, and that it's one you really want to destroy. Setting off bombs in the wrong order can make a level impossible to complete, so you should only really activate a bomb if you're sure you want to do it.

CALL THIS A HERO?

Not really. He is, however, the character you play – a fat, blue, brain-dead blob with a big red nose called, well, he doesn't really seem to have a name, so I'll call him...Guy. (*But we called him Malcolm in the All-Time Top 100 supplement, Gary! Ed*). Yes, but I don't like the name Malcolm, I like Guy.

Anyway. Sadly, Guy (*Malcolm.Ed*) hasn't really got the sort of swoony, missy-magnet machismo you'd normally associate with guys his line of work. Nope, Guy's a bit of big girl's blouse really. You just watch, right? When the gunpowder goes up, he stands there, rooted to the spot, with his big white hands over his eyes and a dopey, 'eek-isn't-it-scarey' expression on his face. What a jessie.

In gameplay terms, what this means is that you've got to get him well out of the way of an explosion before it actually happens, because when it actually goes off he'll stop running and if he's too close his pathetic existence will come to an end. He doesn't even get to go to *Bombuzal* Heaven, because there isn't one. It's a simple as that.

One other thing: Guy may be soft in the head, but his body's not. If he falls off a tile and onto the blue parquet-style floor below he dies. (Just be careful not to overshoot too often).

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

One thing you've got to remember while playing the game is never, never stand still for too long (no matter how tempting it may be whe you're trying to suss out the layout of the level and so on). Remaining stationary for 10 seconds or so prompts the appearance of a five-second timer. When it starts to tick down above your head you know something bad's going to happen. And it will if you don't move before the timer reaches zero.

What sort of bad thing? Well, If you happen to be standing on one of the more normal tiles when the timer depletes, the tile in question turns into a Spinner. These nasty little blighters whisk you off your tile whether you wanted to go or not – usually in a decidely fatal direction. Spinners don't appear on dissolving tiles or tiles with bombs on, but that's nothing to write home

BUT BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE...

...you'd better pick your options from this title screen. You can use a joystick, the keyboard or the mouse to move the arrow around and select an option (we recommend that you use the mouse – it's the fastest and easiest method) and then select it by clicking on it. Once the parameters of the game are set to your requirements, they stay the same until you change them.

ONE UP
Anyone without friends or hard enough to go it alone should choose this single-player option. It's also used to turn off the TWO UP option.

CONTROL
Hey, whatever takes your fancy. This is where it's at for Player One, with a single click cycling through the three control possibilities.

START
Pretty obvious really.

CODE
Determine Player One's starting level by pointing here and pressing the mouse's left-hand firebutton to make four dashes appear. Now you can enter a new four-letter code – and there's no need to press the RETURN or ENTER keys after the fourth letter. Incidentally, the key still acts as a backspace.

VIEW
Here's where Player One decides how he or she would like to see events unfold during play. The default symbol of four blocks refers to the fact that the view chosen is determined when START is selected. However, should you choose either 2D or 3D instead, the view overrides that chosen from the START menu.

HI-SCORES
Guess what? You got it – the egocentrics' graveyard. When you get bored with viewing the super scores that you and your friends have achieved, press a firebutton to return to the options screen.

VIEW
Player Two's view, which can in fact be different to Player One's.

TWO UP
The popular people can play with or compete against someone else if they select this. The border around this little box will turn green to show that it's active. Note that both players can choose to begin play from different levels. Or maybe you'd both like to choose the same level and help each other out – or see who gets the furthest. Whatever your choice, Player One and Player Two play alternately.

CONTROL
Player Two's control method is chosen here.

CODE
Yes, you can actually decide on which level Player Two is to start – and it can be totally different to that for Player One.

LOADING BOMBUZAL

Heavens, you should try falling off logs sometime. (That's far more difficult than getting *Bombuzal* blazing from your TV or monitor). First, ensure that no other program is running and that no-one's left a disk lying around inside the Amiga's internal drive. If all is clear, insert your *Bombuzal* disk. If your Amiga is turned off, turn it on. There – *Bombuzal* should now load and run automatically.

The gorgeous picture shown here should appear during the loading of the main program, only to be replaced by an option-packed title screen once the first stage of disk accessing action is complete. Please note that you must leave the *Bombuzal* disk in the drive (that's right, funny guy – under your dad's car) during play.

.AND WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF IT DOESN'T WORK

Hold it! Something's not quite right around here!

In the unlikely event that *Bombuzal* fails to load, remove any peripherals from your computer (memory expansion devices should not cause a problem) and repeat the loading procedure. If *Bombuzal* still fails to load – and it's a pain I know (not to mention highly unlikely) – then I'm afraid you must have a faulty disk.

All is not lost though. First try using the DISK-DOCTOR utility on your Workbench disk to rescue it – full details on how to use it can be found in the user's manual that came with your machine. Still no joy? Then don't worry – we'll replace it for you. Simply pop the offending item – along with a SAE to keep it company – into a nice cosy envelope or jiffy bag, and send it to:

Bombuzal Disk Returns, Amiga Power, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

We'll replace it within the month.

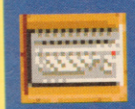
CONTROL POSSIBILITIES

JOYSTICK

To keep everyone happy, two modes of joystick control are on offer. With the pointer on this icon, double-click the left-hand mouse button (that's two quick successive presses) to call up the two directional options. A single click of the mouse's left-hand button while pointing at the relevant icon will determine whether you play using diagonal movements (useful if you play in 3D mode) or horizontal and vertical movements.

MOUSE

To be honest, this isn't the best method of control. Forget it. Just in case you are stupid enough to use the mouse to play, the left-hand button acts as the firebutton.

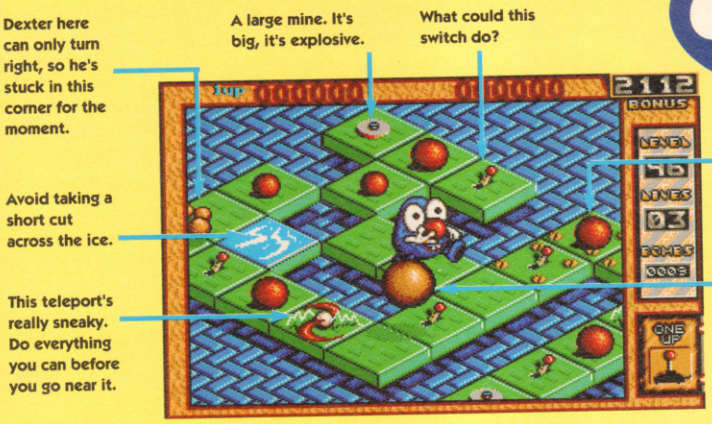


KEYBOARD

These are the keys to please...

RIGHT	/	LEFT	.
DOWN	Z	UP	A
FIRE	RIGHT SHIFT		

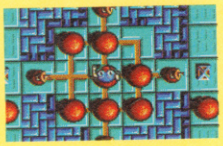
Alternatively, you can always define your own. With the pointer on this icon, double-click the mouse's left-hand button. Now you can choose your keys. Note that there are four keys which cannot be used as their functions are carved in stone. Those keys are: the SPACE BAR, F1, ESC and the ~ key that lies directly below it.



STARTING THE GAME!

Right then. Here's where the adventure begins. Selecting this option calls up a choice of four other options...

View the action from above – unless you chose differently via the VIEW option. Extensive research has revealed that a majority of *Bombuzal* players prefer to go about their business in two dimensions as opposed to three. So take a tip from us: use this viewpoint if you want to seriously get somewhere in the game.



View the action from an isometric angle – unless, of course, you chose differently via the VIEW option. The graphics are bigger, prettier and more detailed here, but getting your mind around just where everything is in relation to everything else can be tricky. Our tip: use this option to impress any passing chicks.

Play *Bombuzal* starting from the level determined by the code in the CODE box.

Play *Bombuzal* starting from the level you last tackled during the current load.

JANE'S GUIDE TO BOMBS: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN AND HOW?

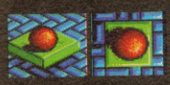
There are various sorts of bomb you'll come across while playing *Bombuzal*. Here's a quick bomb spotter's identification guide, complete with the first appearance of each in one in the game.

SMALL MINE
First Appearance: Level 11

LARGE MINE
First Appearance: Level 17

SMALL BOMB
First Appearance: Level 1

MEDIUM BOMB
First Appearance: Level 2



LARGE BOMB
First Appearance: Level 3

AERIAL BOMBS

Or A-Bombs as they are sometimes known. These devious devices are just like their regular counterparts but with a special feature: when one A-Bomb is detonated it sets off all the other A-Bombs on that level, regardless of their proximity. They come in two sizes too...

SMALL A-BOMB
First Appearance: Level 12

LARGE A-BOMB
First Appearance: Level 12

SWELL BOMBS

These are so-called not because they are but because they do. The Swell Bomb increases and decreases in size (ie sometime's it's effectively a small bomb, sometimes a large one) until either it or any other type of explosive is activated. Then it goes off – when its blast radius is determined by its size at the time of the incident.

First Appearance: Level 13

BOMBS AND THEIR BLAST RADIUSES (OR DEATH AND HOW TO AVOID IT)

The size of a bomb is directly proportional to its blast radius. Thus a small mine and a small bomb will have the same destructive force. The only exception being the Large Mine, which has a blast radius equivalent to that of a Medium Bomb.

SHADED
Bombs (or mines) on these tiles will be set off, and the tiles themselves destroyed (with the exception of those that are invulnerable – more on these later).

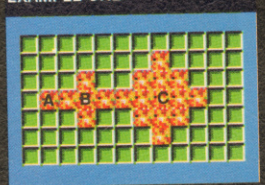
OPEN
Bombs (or mines) on these tiles will be set off, otherwise the tiles will remain intact.

SMALL BOMB (OR MINE)

MEDIUM BOMB (OR LARGE MINE)

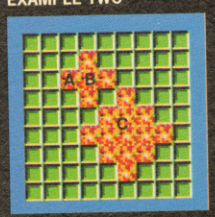
LARGE BOMB
A bomb (or mine) will only set off another if their blast radiuses actually butt up against each other. Here are two examples...

EXAMPLE ONE



Bomb A (small) will set off bomb B (medium) which in turn will set off Bomb C (large).

EXAMPLE TWO



Bomb A (small) will set off bomb B (medium) but NOT bomb C (large).

about – they do their own thing instead, which can be equally dangerous to you.

YOU DID IT!

You cocky get. Completing a level is obviously a Good Thing. What you may not realise is that it's actually a Very Good Thing. You see, apart from getting a go on the next level, you also get any remaining time converted into points and added to your score. Not only that, you also get a Floor Bonus of 10 points for every intact tile. And, if that wasn't good enough, an extra life is awarded too.

GAME OVER

The fun comes to an end when all your lives have been used up. But don't despair – you can always try again. On completion you'll be given a four-letter code. By entering a code in the CODE box on the title screen you can begin play from a level further into the game when you next want a go. The code you will see most often to start with is the one for Level One (BOMB), while the first new code you will be given is for Level Eight. The next two codes will come with the completion of Level 16 and Level 24 and then every fourth level thereafter.

DURING PLAY

Bad luck. There's no pause mode, so you can't sit back and assess the situation at your leisure. Come to think of it, you can't even stop to answer the door or the call of nature. (It isn't the programmers being forgetful that's ommited the pause mode by the way – since a lot of the challenge of the game is that you've got to keep moving and think on your feet, allowing you to assess the situation at you leisure would obviously be a no-no).

That having been said though, there are a few very special keys that it might prove useful to know about. And they are...

SPACE BAR: Before you even begin to blow up any bombs, it's a good idea to take a butcher's at an overview of the situation. Press the SPACE BAR to call up a map of the current level. Press the **SPACE BAR:** again (or the firebutton) to return to the real world as it were. Note that the timer does not stop while you actually view the map – that'd make life far too easy.

ESC: Press the ESC key to quit to the title/option screen.

TONY'S TOP TIP

Here's a tip from Tony Crowther – When you come across a layout with lots of dissolving tiles, walk over as many as possible before attempting to complete the level. This earns you far more points than you'd get with the Floor Bonus. ■

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Apart from all the brilliant bombs and top-hole tiles, *Bombuzal* features four freaky alien types, two of which are good. The other two are – surprise – bad, and should be avoided at all cost.

THE GOOD GUYS: When you find one of these chaps you can take control of it in much the same way you set off bombs – by holding down the firebutton until the timer hits zero. While you are in control of one of these robots, Guy can't be hurt by any enemies, so it's safe to just leave him where he is and forget about him for a while. He can still be blown up though, so watch out what you're going. When a good fella is dead, you'll find that the control reverts to Guy.

BUBBLE: This red robot is so stupid it treats all bombs as mines. Just mind he doesn't fall off the edge before he gets the chance to explode. **First Appearance: Level 17**

SQUEEK: Your blue buddy is marginally more intelligent than Bubble, and as a result does anything you can do – including falling off the edge. **First Appearance: Level 13**

AND THE BAD BOYS: Ooh, and aren't they just. You can avoid them or blow them up – but whatever you do, don't touch them.

SINISTER: This big yellow ball only ever turns left. **First Appearance: Level 17**

DEXTER: The cluster of four yellow balls always turns right. **First Appearance: Level 11**

KNOW YOUR TILES

As with the bombs, things aren't as simple as they first appear. In fact, there are oodles of different sorts of tile, and they all have some decidedly different properties. Such as...

NORMAL TILE: Mundane is every way, it's destroyed by explosions but not through contact with Guy. **First Appearance: Level 1**

DISSOLVER: This tile, recogniseable by its interesting cracked appearance, lives up to its name by dissolving as soon as Guy has touched it and moved on. You can't go back that way again. **First Appearance: Level 1**

ICE: You just can't stand still on one of these. In fact you can't stand on one of these tiles at all. **First Appearance: Level 2**

SLOT: Here's a novelty – bombs may be moved about on these from one slot to another connecting slot. A bomb on one of these special embossed tiles is picked up with a quick tap on the firebutton and dropped with another quick tap. Note that you cannot carry a bomb past another bomb or from a slot to any other type of tile. When moving bombs, it's not always easy or time effective to execute a quick press of the firebutton to drop them. Instead, if possible move onto another tile either with a bomb on it or without a slot. The bomb will automatically drop to the floor. **First Appearance: Level 3**

TELEPORT: It doesn't, as you could be forgiven for expecting, teleport you to another tile with a teleport on it. In fact you won't know where a teleport takes you until you enter into it, and by then it may be too late. Yes, it's a risk, but one that's often worth taking, and at least the destinations remain constant for each level. Note that if Guy moves into a teleport tile after detonating a bomb, he won't reappear until the exploding has stopped – even if the teleporter is destroyed. This can prove a very useful way of saving your life, especially as the large bombs are notoriously difficult (read 'impossible') to get far enough away from to survive. **First Appearance: Level 6**

RIVETTED: Rivetted tiles are rough 'n' tough and more than capable of surviving the mightiest of explosions. **First Appearance: Level 13**

TEMPLE: By absorbing the explosion of a neighbouring bomb (or mine), this tile suppresses the blast radius to a single tile and destroys itself in the process. **First Appearance: Level 17**

SPINNER: Throws you off one tile away in a randomly determined direction. these also appear if you hang around doing nothing for too long. **First Appearance: Level 17**

SWITCH: It works in much the same way as a bomb, only it doesn't explode when the timer runs out. Instead, its effect is reversed. A switch which is thrown will change the map in some subtle way. It could be the addition of a tile of any description. It could even be the addition of a bomb. Coo. (It's always worth throwing any switches you come across to see what they can do – often a level will only be completeable when you take advantage of them). **First Appearance: Level 11**

AMIGA UPDATES – AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUR PROGRAM

Owners of the very newest Amigas (the ones with the little green power lights) may find *Bombuzal* looks slightly different on their machines to on older Amigas. This is due to subtle changes Commodore have made to the inside of the machines, but don't worry – it won't make any difference gameplay at all. It *does* make the in-game music run slightly faster than you'd expect though (opinion in this office is split over whether it's actually an improvement or not) and means the bomb timers will run down that bit faster. They won't go off until you've stepped off the tile though, so it doesn't really change the game.

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TRUE STORIES

WELCOME TO AMIGA POWER

It's always a bit of a problem with first issues. What do you say? Do you say hey wow, fab and groovy, look at all the great things in this magazine, why buy any other (and so on)? Or do you go really quiet and sheepish and not say anything very much, hoping the magazine will speak for itself. Hmm. I think we'll go for the first option myself.

So. Amiga Power! It's fab and groovy! It's got full colour all the way through! It's going to review every game that comes out – not just the best ones, or the ones that just happen to plop through our letter box each month! It's going to be honest - there'll be none of this 'every game gets 80%' stuff! It's not going to have anything irrelevant in it at all – no techie, widgety stuff, and certainly not a load of old rubbish about pop stars/ clothes/ comics/ whatever! It's going to carry a disk packed with hot demos and 'stuff' on the front every month! It's going to run compendious reviews of older software too, giving you a proper perspective on whole gaming 'scene'! It's going to...but, ah. I give up. My heart just wasn't into all that trumpet blowing, willy-waving stuff I'm afraid.

No, I think you're going to have to judge us by what we do and not by what we say. Which means it's time I shut up right about now.

MATT BIELBY

AMIGA POWER/ MILLENNIUM MOONSHINE RACERS COMPETITION

Win! Two Formula Fun Dirt Buster remote control off-road buggies!

It's true! Each car is about 11 inches long, goes like a rocket, and would normally cost you between 40 and 50 quid. While they're not quite the same as the cars the good ol' boys drive in *Moonshine Racers*, they're sort of similar, and certainly the nearest we could get down our local remote control car shop.

Winning one is simple. Everyone knows about illegal moonshine smuggling – after all, we've all seen the Dukes Of Hazzard – but what exactly *is* moonshine? And how do you make it? The best two recipes or explanations – we'll be trying them out in the office to see if they work – win a car each. (We can't really say fairer than that.)

Just send your instructions (make them easy to follow please) to *Moonshine Racers* Compo, Amiga Power, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And get them to us by May 24th or you won't stand a chance of winning!

BITCHIN'!
Ocean's home computer incarnations of television's favourite family *The Simpsons* are in the capable hands of Arc Developments, the team most recently behind Activision's *Dragon Breed* conversion. Incidentally, Arc is currently applying the finishing touches to the long-

awaited conversion of *R-Type 2* for Activision. First impressions are good, with programmer Tim Round (who did such a smart job on *Dragon Breed*) seemingly managing to capture the flavour of the coin-operated original – including the parallax scrolling backdrop. Look out for a full review in a future issue...

Ocean's home computer versions of *Terminator II: Judgement Day* are in the hands of Dimentia, the team (partly) responsible for Core Design's *Corporation* and more recently Probe's *Golden Axe* for Virgin. The film, once again starring Arnold Schwarzenegger under the direction of James Cameron, opens sometime later this year.

SHIRLEY QUITS AMIGA

Fans of Firebird's *Quartz* and Electric Dreams' *Spindizzy Worlds* won't be pleased to hear that the author of these two gems, Paul Shirley, has left 16-bit programming behind him to concentrate on conversion work for the Sega MegaDrive console. And it's unlikely he'll return...

..AND SO DOES PHILLIPS (HE'LL BE BACK THOUGH)

John Phillips, author of the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100 game *Nebulus*, has also left the 16-bit scene to get down to some Sega conversion work. John's last released computer project was *Eliminator* through Hewson over two years ago. Since then he worked on *Scavenger* (also for Hewson) which was unfortunately shelved.

As with all of John's previous work, *Scavenger* utilised a novel new technique – *Nebulus* centred around those silky-smooth rotating towers, *Eliminator* had slick road and sprite expansion routines, while *Scavenger*'s 'thing' was that it contained shadows that distorted realistically against background objects. Fortunately, unlike Mr

Scavenger – now shelved.

Shirley, John *will* be returning to the home computer scene. Work on his next original project is likely to begin sometime this month and – yes! – it'll utilise an updated version of those very same shadow techniques...

INTERESTING IF TRUE...

Rumours abound that Mirrorsoft has secured the licence to bring *Aliens 3* to the home computer. However, spokespeople refuse to confirm or deny the fact.

In contrast to its predecessors, the movie doesn't feature any hi-tech hardware. Instead heroine Ripley (played by Sigourney Weaver) apparently uses an axe to fend off the aliens' advances! It's also rumoured that there are a few extra alien types this time around, including a giant 'space cow'. *Aliens 3* is currently being filmed at Pinewood for release towards the end of this year.

While Ocean work on *Terminator 2* (see story to the left), Virgin has the licence to bring the original *Terminator* to the Sega console system. Whether the company can extend this to the Amiga remains to be seen...

POPULOUS – WITH LAUGHS?

This is *Mega lo Mania* from Sensible Software – and yes, you're right, it does look a little like *Populous*. The scenario has you and three computer opponents landing on a watery planet which you've got to colonise from scratch. Time passes – moving from the prehistoric through Roman to English Civil War, industrial Victorian and so on – while all the time you've got to defend your little colony from attack and (if possible) fight and defeat your opponents.

Slighter than *Populous*, but faster moving and potentially more fun, its main claim to fame is that it comes with one whole disk loaded with digitised speech – real actors were brought in to make the recordings apparently! – to really add character to the proceedings. Look for an August release from Image Works.

Everything in *Mega lo Mania* is presented as if it were somehow suspended in space. These screens are from one of the more primitive levels - they've got as far as developing castles, as you can see. Don't ask us what all the stuff on the left is though...

...there isn't really the room to explain (not even using both these caption boxes). These white screens are from a different time zone – notice the change in building style. (The big shame is that you can't get an impression of the digitised voices from the pictures).

Veteran publisher Novagen's latest is to be a new version of an old favourite – the company's debut release in fact. *Encounter* first appeared way back

in 1983 on the Atari XL, and this new Amiga incarnation features pretty much the same straightforward cat 'n' mouse blasting action as its forerunner. *Amiga Encounter* will both look and sound a lot better though, in large part thanks to some swish three-dimensional effects pinched from Novagen's unreleased shoot 'em up *Skeltor*. It's released at the end of April at £19.99 – full review next ish.

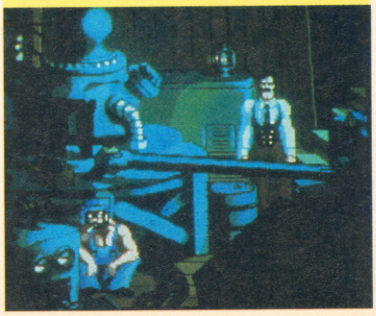
CRIB SHEETS

The first in a series of quick guides to people, companies and, erm, 'things' in the software industry for people who should know all about them already (but probably don't).

No1 U.S. GOLD

Contact: Danielle Woodyatt at U.S. Gold Ltd, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.
History: Formed in 1984 by Geoff and Anne Brown of Centresoft (the software distribution company) with David Ward and John Woods of Ocean as directors and shareholders. Ward and Woods are still involved, though less so than they used to be.
Affiliated labels:
Current: Access, Delphine, Epyx, Futura, Kixx (budget), Lucasfilm, Millennium (distribution only), New Worlds, SSI
And in the past: Accolade, Adventure Soft, Broderbund, Cosmi, DataSoft, English Software, MicroProse, Origin, Rainbow Arts, Toposoft, Ultimate, Vortex Software (and probably quite a few others we've forgotten).
Biggest successes: Commercially, games like *Beach Head*, *Gauntlet*, *OutRun*, *Raid Over Moscow*, *Winter Games* and – yes! – *World Cup Carnival* have really 'done the business' for them. In 1985 they perhaps reached their peak, with *Impossible Mission* the biggest selling game of the year and Gallup recognising U.S. Gold as the most successful UK software house. Recently US Gold have had less in the way of sure-fire commercial hits – they seem effectively to have given up competing with Ocean as the biggest selling UK software house – but instead coped with the rise of the 16 bits by publishing some strong original product. Lacking in-house programmers of their own, they've had most critical success with Assembly Line products like *E-Motion* and *Vaxine*, as well as graphic adventures (and similar) imported from Delphine and Lucasfilm.
Biggest failures: *World Cup Carnival* (a dreadful last minute mish mash which received some of the lowest marks ever seen by a computer game) has to be seen as the all-time low point, despite its commercial success, while *Shirley Muldowney's Top Fuel Challenge* (an appalling drag racing game from Cosmi) and *Chernobyl* (a rather tasteless release which had CND protesting at the door) provide stiff competition.
Typical US Gold game: Hard to say now. Used to be firmly arcade licence based, but more recently the product line up has been changing, with a wide range of successful foreign software houses represented , as well as an increasing amount of critically acclaimed original 16-bit product. 'Expect more of this in the future,' apparently.
Typical industry comment on USG: Well, it's not quite the force it used to be, is it?
Things to come: Highlights of the year will include *Cruise For A Corpse* from Delphine and *The Secret Of Monkey Island* from Lucasfilm (both due soon) as well as the long awaited arrival of *OutRun Europa* (first previewed around Easter '89!). Look out too for the official *Godfather* series of games – of which Delphine's adventure version, at least, sounds very promising indeed.

***Cruise For A Corpse* – new from Delphine.**



ALAN GRANT

Alan Grant writes comics – he worked on Judge Dredd for years (often sharing writing duties with the strip's creator John Wagner) as well as many of the other famous 2000AD characters. Currently he's working on Batman for DC in America, a new UK comics project called Toxic, and has a number of other irons in a number of other fires – one of which is this new departure, a text adventure game called *Demoniak*.

How did you get involved with this project then Alan?

Palace contacted me through a friend of a friend – they had this new adventure game system idea and they wanted someone who could bring a fresh approach to a game, perhaps someone from the world of comics. They knew my material already, they'd seen Batman, Judge Dredd and so on.

And how did you respond?

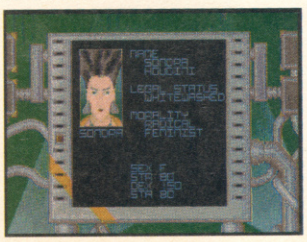
I was very happy to do it. I'd already been involved in computer games in a different way, doing a strip called Computer Warrior for the revived Eagle. The stories were based on the plots of computer games but both John Wagner and myself didn't like playing them so we got someone else to do it and then tell us what the stories were about. I like simple arcade games like *Space Invaders* or *Centipede* but I can't handle complicated ones because I'm basically computer illiterate.

How did you go about creating the game?

They got me to come up with the characters first and the basic scenario, then we got together – the Palace people, myself and the programmer – at the Palace offices in London and hammered it out. I did a more detailed synopsis and they explained what we could and couldn't do. Then every so often over a period of about a year we'd meet some more and see how it was coming on. It seemed like a very long time scale to me - I'm used to people wanting comic stories really fast.

From what you've seen do you think it's been a success?

Well, I haven't actually seen the finished thing yet, but I liked the way the last version I saw was going. I have to admit that I'll probably never play it when I do get a copy, but I'll look forward to just owning one anyway. And yes, I'd be quite interested in doing another one, but we'll have to see how this one does first. After all, it might bomb out. ■



One of Alan's very comic book-like characters from *Demoniak*.

DAMOCLES 2: DOUBLE TROUBLE

We'll have to wait a bit for this one, but it should be worth it. *Damocles 2: Double Trouble* is the sequel to the sequel to Novagen's mould-breaking adventure *Mercenary*. Once again the comet Damocles is heading towards the planet Eris. With only a few hours to spare, the race is on to prevent disaster. That's trouble Number One.

The other half of the *Double Trouble* is the result of Novagen taking note of a criticism levelled at the original *Damocles* – that the going got a little too lonely at times. Now we have a villain to contend with too.

The bad egg in question goes by the name of K C Kim. He rules the outer reaches of the Damocles solar system, but for some bizarre reason wants to restrict his dominance by destroying the other planets. Needless to say, his exploits cause their own share of problems on each planet.

The first *Damocles* – solid vector graphics, lots of exploration, but no real enemy.

Damocles 2 will be released this summer, a year since its predecessor first came amongst us. Incidentally, for those on a tighter budget, *Mercenary* itself is now available at the budget price of £9.99.

THE AMIGA POWER ROCK-HARD QUIZ

Compiled by Gary Penn – These questions aren't easy. They aren't even just plain tough. Nope, these questions are rock-hard. No prizes for answering them, but if you can you can seriously count yourself a Grade-A software smart-arse. (Softies can flick to the bottom of page 18 for the answers). 1) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Paul and Vince? 2) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Ben and Andy? 3) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Hit Man and Max Force? 4) In which forthcoming Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Mobo and Robo? (This one's easy – the answer's in this very True Stories). 5) And (just for variety) in which Amiga conversion would you find two sickeningly cute sweethearts called Betty and Patty?

Oh dear...

The first in an occasional series where we take a game we think is useless and are really horrible to it.

No1. STREET HOCKEY (Gonzo Games)

After bursting onto the Amiga games scene with the generally well-received *Wipe Out*, Gonzo Games ('We like games') unleashed this simulation of one of the fastest-moving and most dynamic sports around. (Can you guess which one?) Officially endorsed by the British Street Hockey Association, *Street Hockey* promised to be thrilling, violent, and 'so addictive it should be illegal'. It wasn't. It was crap.

No, crap is far too bland a word to describe its breathtaking awfulness. The monumentally dire graphics were the least of its problems, indistinct and jerky though they were. The mind-bogglingly hopeless sound ('mluh!') was but a scratch on a shotgun wound, and the epidemic of bugs (such as goals being scored during the half-time break) didn't so much spoil the game as provide some light relief.

No, the real problem was with the playability. It simply didn't have any. Players skated around at random, fell down at random, hit the puck at random, and lurched randomly into walls as the computer switched the player you controlled, well, pretty much at random. After about three seconds of play, the featureless pitch made it impossible to tell which way you were facing - not that it really mattered as it was impossible to tell where the puck was anyway. Or where any of your players were. Or why you were still playing this scarcely-believable excuse for a full-price computer game. Utterly, utterly abysmal.

***Powerdrome* author Michael Powell is putting the finishing touches to his latest project, *CyberFight*. It's a sexy-looking first person perspective polygon-based beat-'em-up of sorts involving robots. Michael has written *CyberFight* on the IBM PC first, which sadly means that the Amiga version won't be with us until next year.**

Having made a mark with its arcade conversion debut of Gottlieb's *Exterminator*, Audiogenic are set to produce a sequel of their own design. The company is looking to silence critics of the original who were quick to condemn the title's playability, as *Exterminator II* will contain many enhancements, including some special new weapons and secret rooms. Stay tuned for further details...

LETTERS!
We haven't got any yet (fairly obviously, being a new magazine) but that doesn't mean we don't want some! Send your tips/opinions/ comments/ whatever to Amiga Power, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Tell us what you think of the magazine by all means, but there'll be special prizes for anyone who a) can convince us *why* The All-Time Top 100 Games supplement was a load of old rubbish, or b) why *Street Hockey* isn't a pile of old crap but actually a sadly under-rated classic. Write now!

WHERE DO YOU GO AFTER KICK OFF?

Steve Screech knows. With the award winning *Kick Off* and *Kick Off 2* to his name, he's currently in the final throws of putting together another similar game – but based around a very different sport. *Tip Off*, as it's called, is a basketball simulation, and sees Steve working with *Kick Off* programmer Dino Dini once again. Apparently they've been making use of extensive video footage of American basketball to ensure that the tactics employed in *Tip Off* are as authentic as possible. Look for it to be released from Anco sometime this summer.

ZZKJ TO DO OCEAN'S SMASH TV

With the conversions of *Super Hang-On*, *Power Drift* and (more recently) *Super Monaco GP* under his belt, programmer ZZKJ is turning his hand to a conversion of a different genre – Williams' ultra-violent blaster *Smash TV*. You can expect to see the fruits of ZZKJ's labour later this year through Ocean. Incidentally, veteran video game manufacturer Williams (who enjoyed much success in the industry's formative years with such innovative wares as *Defender*, *Stargate*, and *Robotron 2084*) are in the middle of making a comeback of sorts. Having concentrated on some highly playable pintables during the past decade, the company is set to release a least half-a-dozen new video games. *NARC* you'll have already seen, while next up is *Total Carnage*, the sequel to *Smash TV*, which promises to be even more OTT (if that's possible) than its predecessor.

3D SNOOKER

If bashing balls in Firebird's *3D Pool* (budget price review this issue) left you feeling a little sore, here's an alternative – *3D Snooker*, from the man who brought you *IK+*. Featuring all the rules of the real thing and an impressive 3D polygon display, it looks as though Archer Maclean has chalked up another winner. The game was originally to have been released through Activision, but with that company well and truly 'wound down' these days, Virgin Games will be publishing instead. Expect to see it sometime this September.

HEAD OVER HEELS COMES TO AMIGA

Jon Ritman's classic 8-bit isometric arcade adventure *Head Over Heels* is set to appear on the Amiga, but Ocean isn't sure when and how. *Head Over Heels* concerns the exploits of two cute characters, one called Head and the other – surprise – Heels. What makes *Head Over Heels* stand (ah) head and shoulders above other adventures of this type is the unique interaction between its two stars to overcome awkward situations. How well this classic makes the transition to 16-bit remains to be seen...

CODE MASTERS
Nos 5, 8, 13, 18, 41, 44, 46, 78, 83, 90, 96, 100 (!)

Blimey! Code Masters seem to have quite a few games in the charts, don't they? We rang them

up for a bit of a natter:

First off, it's hard to see the same sort of person who would buy F-19 Stealth Fighter *or even* Speedball 2 *really going a bundle on something like* Little Puff, *isn't it?*

'Well, we tend to think that Amiga owners come in all shapes and sizes, and we think yes, we're picking up a lot of the younger owners, but we're also picking up older people who want a new game but aren't willing to spend 25 quid on it.'

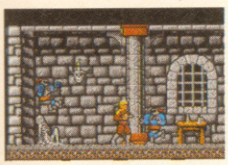
Why do you think your new titles shape up so well against much more well known, arguably better re-releases, like, say, R-Type, Silkworm *or Interceptor?*

'We see 16-bit re-releases as a bit futile because when a game's been around as long as some of these have, and especially when it's a big name title, it'll have been hacked and copied and everyone will have a pirate version already. With our games, fewer people are going to bother hacking it as it's cheap enough for anyone who wants a copy to just go out and buy one.'

Finally, what are your games doing at so many totally different price points?

'Well, the older games, like *Treasure Island Dizzy*, are at £4.99, which was a price point we set before there really was a 16-bit budget market. Later we upped it to £6.99 to raise our margins (ie we weren't making much profit at £4.99) and finally we took it up a pound to £7.99 because that was the price The Hit Squad and Mastertronic and everyone else was at, and we felt pressure to conform.'

A-ha! That'll be that then.



DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH
No46

Was £24.99 only a few short months ago. Now, to you guv, available at a mere £7.99. Okay, so *Defenders* wasn't the world's best game, but isn't that just a ridiculously short shelf life at full price? Eh?

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS

AMIGA TOP 100

1 LEMMINGS/ Psygnosis £24.99 *****
2 TURRICAN 2/ Rainbow Arts £24.99 ***
3 SPEEDBALL 2/ Image Works £24.99 *****
4 SWIV/ Storm £24.99 *****
5 FANTASY WORLD DIZZY/ Code Masters £6.99 ****
6 R-TYPE/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ***
7 FINAL WHISTLE/ Anco £12.99 **
8 LITTLE PUFF IN DRAGONLAND/ Code Masters £7.99 **
9 F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER/ MicroProse £29.99 ****
10 A-10 TANK KILLER/ Sierra £34.99 **

11) PANZA KICK BOXING/ US Gold £24.99 *
12) SUPER HANG ON/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ****
13) TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY/ Code Masters £4.99 ****
14) KICK OFF 2/ Anco £24.99 *****
15) SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR/ Kixx £7.99 **
16) MOONWALKER/ Kixx £7.99 *
17) FC MANAGER/ Energize £6.99
18) SUPER GRAND PRIX/Code Masters £9.99 **
19) MIG 29 FULCRUM/ Domark £24.99 ****
20) FIST OF FURY 2 COMPILATION/ Virgin £29.99 ***
21) UMS 2/ Rainbird £29.99 ***
22) DOUBLE DRAGON/ Mastertronic £9.99 **
23) WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD/ Kixx £7.99 *****
24) GAUNTLET 2/ Kixx £7.99 ***
25) VIGILANTE/ Kixx £7.99 *
26) POWERMONGER/ Electronic Arts £29.99 *****
27) SILKWORM/ Mastertronic £6.99 ****
28) M1 TANK PLATOON/ MicroProse £24.99 ***
29) CONTINENTAL CIRCUS/ Mastertronic £7.99 ***
30) HONG KONG PHOOEY/ Hi-Tec £6.99 ***
31) TOYOTA CELICA RALLY/ Gremlin Graphics £24.99 ***
32) HOLLYWOOD COLLECTION/ Ocean £24.99 **
33) OUTRUN/ Kixx £7.99 **
34) PRO TENNIS TOUR 2/ Ubi Soft £24.99 ****
35) BARBARIAN 2/ Kixx £7.99 *
36) ROBOCOP 2/ Ocean £24.99 ***
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45) CLASSIC 4/ Energize £6.99 **
46) CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS/ Code Masters £6.99 **
47) NIGHT SHIFT/ US Gold £24.99 ***
48) DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH/ Hi-Tec £7.99 *
49) LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE/ Gremlin Graphics £24.99 *****
50) BAT/ Ubi Soft £24.99 ***
51) COLORADO/ Action 16 £7.99 **
52) FUN SCHOOL 3 (AGE 5-7)/ Database (Mandarin) £24.99 ****
53) THUNDER BLADE/ Kixx £7.99 *
54) AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER/ Kixx £7.99 **
55) ELVIRA/ Accolade £29.99 **
56) MULTI PLAYER SOCCER MANAGER/ D&H Games £24.99 *
57) BLAZING THUNDER/ Hi-Tec £6.99 ****
58) YOGI BEAR & FRIENDS IN 'THE GREED MONSTER'/ Hi-Tec £7.99 **
59) TOWER FRA/ Thalion £24.99 **
60) KENNY DALGLISH SOCCER MANAGER/ Zeppelin £7.99 *
61) TEAM YANKEE/ Empire £29.99 **
62) F-29 RETALIATOR/ Ocean £24.99 ****
63) EUROPEAN SOCCER CHALLENGE/ Players £4.99 **
64) THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY/ Mastertronic £7.99 ***
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71) POWER PACK COMPILATION/ Beau Jolly £24.99 **
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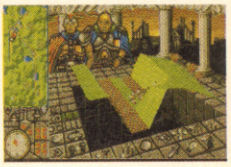
89) GUNSHIP/ MicroProse £29.99 ***
90) SPELLFIRE THE SORCERER/ Code Masters £6.99 ****
91) ROAD BLASTERS/ Kixx £7.99 **
92) BATMAN (THE MOVIE)/ Ocean £24.95 ****
93) BLITZKREIG MAY 1940/ Impressions £24.99 **
94) RAINBOW ISLANDS/ Ocean £24.99 *****
95) CHASE HQ 2 – SCI/ Ocean £24.99 **
96) QUATTRO ARCADE COMPILATION/ Code Masters £12.99 ***
97) DAS BOOT/ Mindscape £29.99 ***
98) GOLDEN AXE/ Virgin £24.99 ***
99) JAWS/ Alternative £9.99 *
100) THE SWORD & THE ROSE/ Code Masters £6.99



POWERMONGER
No 26

Powermonger's still doing pretty well despite its age, isn't it EA?

'Yes, and we're expecting it to be in the charts for some time to come. It was No1 on the Amiga over Christmas, and in the first month of shipping sold more than *Populous* managed in a year! We believe it's sold more on the Amiga than just about any other game ever – we certainly can't think of another that's done better. It's still No 1 in Germany you know, and has been since it came out. In fact *Populous* is still in the Top 10 there – they like their strategy games'.

I'll say.

'In fact, I bet you a tenner *Powermonger* is still in the UK Top 50 by Christmas. How about that?'

Erm, blimey! You're on! (Let's hope it's 51, eh readers?)

MIRRORSOFT
NoS 3, 42, 43, 84, 88

Mirrorsoft (and their various affiliated labels) seem to be making one of the strongest full price showings at the mo.

What do you put that down to, guys?

'If you look at all these they were released either right at the beginning of the year or before Christmas, so to see them all still doing so well is very heartening. It shows these are all games that demonstrate long term popularity. After all, it's possible to sell out of a big name game on your first day

ship before anyone's seen how good or bad it is, but you can't con them into buying it over a period of time.'

What? But that was surely exactly the case with Turtles! *How come it's still doing so well? Most people thought it was awful!*

'Well, it shows that journalists can be wrong sometimes. We've actually had a lot of re-orders on *Turtles* – don't forget, it's the sort of thing lots of younger people are playing, and in our experience we've found that the *Turtles* are still quite popular with them.'

A few words about the Amiga Power charts...

•They're put together for us by Gallup (the folks who do the BBC singles and album charts amongst many other things) at the last possible moment in the schedule of the magazine. Thus, loosing a bit of time for the thing to be printed and for you to go out and buy it, they'll generally reflect sales from around a month ago, ie the chart you see here is for the month of March, even though you've may have bought the magazine in April (and just to confuse things further it says May on the cover).

They're certainly the most up to date charts it's possible to bring you – the inclusion of a fair few games only reviewed this issue bears witness to that – and they're the most accurate too. No other chart takes into account sales in so many shops – from small independent stores to large chains like WH Smith – up and down the country. Take it as definitive, or certainly as near to definitive as it is possible to get.

• The charts take the form of a Top 100, run all in one lump, with none of this mucking about dividing things into Full Price and Budget and so on. If you want to do that yourself then fine – it's quite easy – but we think it's more interesting to see everything all together. With two charts, you'd never be able to see whether *Lemmings* was actually selling more than *Fantasy World Dizzy* (which it is) for instance.

• Finally we've rated everything out of five stars (the really good games get extra special red ones) so you get a rough idea of whether everyone's buying crap or not. Games that don't get any stars (and there aren't many of them) aren't necessarily totally crap – it's just that we've never played them so couldn't really say. (Having said that though they're mainly management games, which as far as we're concerned means they're crap almost by definition).

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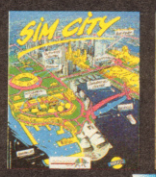

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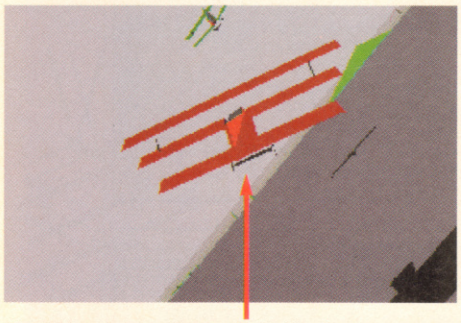
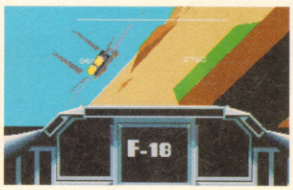
WIZARD KITES

This is *Air Duel* from MicroProse, a simple, action-packed flight sim based almost entirely on a series of dog fights, and conspicuously lacking any of that complicated controls/loads of navigation/basically tricky stuff so beloved of the teams behind most flight sims. Put together by Glyn Williams, the chap behind *Warhead*, it has its roots in game called *Fokker* he first started working on ages back. That was a World War 1 flight sim based on encounters between Sopwith Camels and Fokker triplanes over the trenches of 1917, this is a greatly expanded version, retaining the wizard kites but adding three other classic dogfights from different time periods. There's the air war over the Pacific from WW2, for instance, starring Grumman Wildcats and Mitsubishi Zeroes, then there's a present day F-18 Hornet vs MiG-29 Gulf War scenario, and a futuristic thing set in space. What you see here are some slightly scrappy, yet-to-be-cleaned-up graphics (the Star Wars thing won't really feature craft so obviously ripped off from the big screen, for instance). What you *can't* see is the neat range of play options that'll be included on the finished version, including a human vs human split-screen affair.

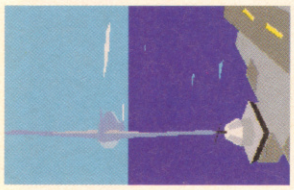


The Fokker triplanes that started it all still make a strong showing in the WW1 level...

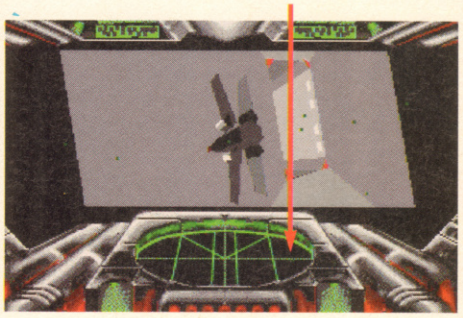


Publishers MicroStyle know all about modern planes – here's the F-18 bit...

...though this Star Wars style scenario isn't the soft of stuff you'd normally imagine them doing.



...joined by Grumman Wildcats in the Pacific war scenario.



Saddest news of the year: Hewson going under. The veteran UK software house, responsible for all-time classics including *Paradroid 90* and *Nebulus*, entered administrative receivership in March this year. Hewson, which had been around since the early '80s and published games by well known programmers like Andrew Braybrook, Steve Turner, John Phillips and Raf Cecco, thus joins the sad ranks of victims of the current recession. News on reasons behind the collapse and future possibilities are scarce – and look like they'll remain that way for some time – but it has to be hoped that a buyer will be found for the

'SPEEDBALL' IN 3D?

Coming soon from Core Design is the company's first future sport simulation. The as yet untitled project, described as 'a sort of 3D *Speedball* type thing with smooth sprite scaling', is being put together by Steven Northcott (who did *Driller* and *Darkside* on the Amiga for Incentive) with additional design from Simon '*Rick Dangerous*' Phipps. The end result should be released this summer.

BACK! BACK! BACK! TWO OLD 'FAVES'

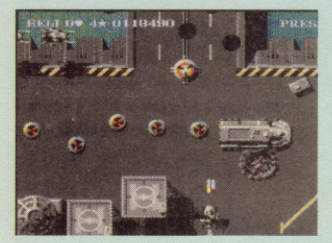
Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the arcade... Domark has acquired the licence to convert Taito's *Super Space Invaders '91* to the home computer formats. You can expect to meet everybody's favourite aliens, along with their new chums including large Boss creatures and – get this – cows (!) before the year is out.

One film licence which Mirrorsoft has definitely not acquired is the sequel to one of last year's biggest-grossing flicks – Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Rather than bring Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Secret Of The Ooze to your screens, Mirrorsoft is producing conversions of the Konami coin-operated version instead.

The story behind Konami's scrolling beat-'em-up sees the Turtles and their chums in all sorts of trouble. First their favourite reporter April O'Neal has to be rescued from a burning building. Then there's a battle with the deadly duo BeBop and Rocksteady. And on top of all that Splinter gets kidnapped by the evil Shredder... Probe is handling the task of converting *Turtles* to the Amiga, in time for a proposed Christmas release.

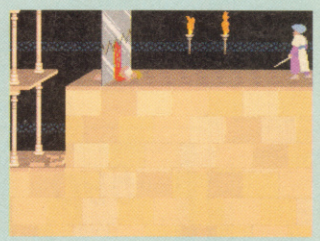
AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Our favourite games of the past few months. (If you haven't bought them yet, why not?)



SWIV
Storm

The zappiest zap since the last really zappy thing, Storm's 'sort of' follow-up to the classic *Silkworm* packs a staggeringly amount of humdinger graphics, ear-splitting sound and devilishly tricky nasties into a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up with just one level – but it's a level that's over 105 screens long! No gaps, no disk-accessing pauses, just terrifying violence on a genocidal scale.

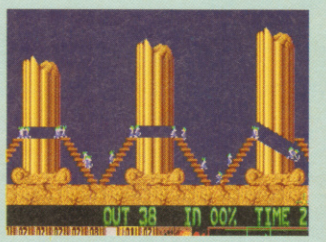


PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund (Domark)

Well thought out flip screen arcade adventures are addictive almost by their very nature, but when they're presented as well as this they become something very special indeed. The animation is the killer of course - your little Arabian Knights-style character is endlessly watchable - but it's coupled with some very finely tuned gameplay too. The words 'instant classic' spring immediately to mind.

SPEEDBALL 2
Image Works

The Bitmap Bros' subtle blend of extreme violence and really extreme violence has garnered rave reviews everywhere, and there's a very good reason. It's bloody brilliant. (Or brilliantly bloody). Easily the best future sport sim to date, and with one-player, two-player and management modes, it'll stick to you like napalm. Absolutely unmissable.



LEMMINGS
Psygnosis

Not sure quite what to say really - this game's a phenomina. Lots of levels and lots and lots of Lemmings - tiny sprites wandering blindly across landscapes riddled with danger, always perfectly happay (if you don't stop them) to plunge to their doom in game-losing numbers. It's like a cutsie platform game crossed with a god sim crossed with a Roger Rabbit cartoon. Will anyone dare do a clone?

DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

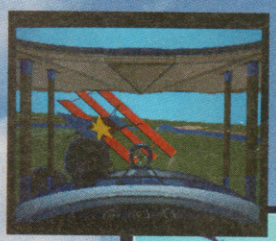
ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

WWI Air Combat Simulation

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Mannock, Rickenbacher—and learn their tricks and techniques.

- Action dogfight, solo, and team missions for one or two players using a single computer with any combination of keyboard, joystick, or mouse.
- Strategy Dogfight: For the skilled purist, Blue Max acts like a highly-intelligent strategic board game, allowing you and your opponent to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
- 8 airplanes to choose from, each with its own highly-detailed flying characteristics.
- Perform missions with, as, or against the Aces of the Great War.
- Dozens of historical missions around 4 different locations within France.

How strong are your nerves at 2,000 feet, with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory, friend. Think survival.



VGA color air combat sequence

Strategy mode split-screen with 3D Hexboard

• VGA 256 3D COLOR GRAPHICS,
• ORIGINAL MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS FOR GAME BLASTER, ADLIB SYNTHESIZER CARDS

NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE AMIGA

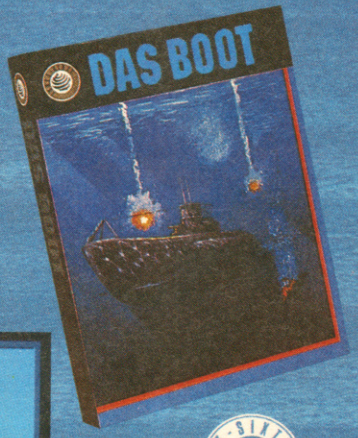
DAS BOOT

GERMAN U-BOAT SIMULATION

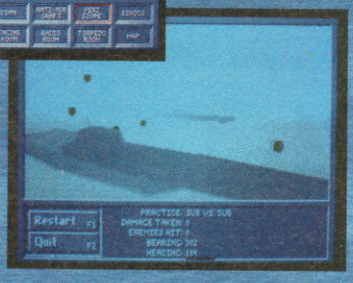
Winter, 1941. The icy waters of the North Atlantic. The deeper you dive, the greater the pressure. Depth charges explode around you, banging on the hull of your U-boat like iron fists. Nerve and cunning make you the terror of the Allied convoys.

- 3D submarine warfare: For the first time, a sub warfare game lets you deal with threats below *and* above the surface in a true three dimensional environment.
- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
- Many missions to choose from—into the North Atlantic and Arctic, inland along the coast of Norway, into the Bay of Biscay, and through the Straits of Gibralter.
- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal *and* external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....



VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft



VGA 256 color mine field under North Atlantic

THREE-SIXTY

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JUST WHO THE HELL DO WE THINK WE ARE? (WELL...)

MATT BIELBY

Matt started life as a humble staff writer at C&VG before defecting to the rather more wild'n'wacky Your Sinclair, where he was deputy editor and then editor within a remarkably short space of time. His career sort of went on hold at that point though, only livening up when Future Publishing bought YS from the London-based Dennis. He moved down to Bath, got YS (sort of) up and running on DTP and was just starting to get fidgety when the 'jolly exciting' launch of Amiga Power came along. He likes cars, comics, boats and fish.

MARK RAMSHAW

Before Amiga Power, Mark used to write, design and edit three monthly newsletters for the Amstrad User Group, including the thrilling Amstrad PCW News. A professional Geordie, he likes Béatrice Dalle, Jane's Addiction and Fishbone (these last two are both groups, apparently), Thunderbird wine and models himself (rather uselessly) on Jim Morrison. He's currently conducting a series of running battles with the woodlice that've invaded his house.

STUART CAMPBELL

There's one thing you have to know about Stuart – he's Scottish. There's another thing too – he holds a fair number of, erm, 'individual' opinions, and isn't shy about sharing them with you either. In fact, our own Jonathan Davies once described his amateur mag Between Planets as 'a computer fanzine for people who don't like computers. Or fanzines. Or life in general'. He likes 'intergalactic punk rock hip-hop' (whatever that's meant to be) and arguing.

TIM SMITH

A cheerful, fluffy bunny sort of a fellow, Tim likes (deep breath) trashy films, playing charades, The Beano, pool, football, whiskey with pink lemonade, the city of Atlanta, and probably plenty of other things we've forgotten. A natural wit and raconteur, he's much in demand at local weddings and bar mitzvahs.

GARY PENN

Gary's been about a bit. He was editor of Zzap! ('in the days when it was good'), co-launched The Games Machine, filled in on (ahem) Knave ('but only for two months'), launched The One and so on. An amateur TV presenter (he introduced a video for Mirrorsoft once), Gary lives in Catford where he attends skipping classes and goes shopping. He likes small children and one day hopes to have his own.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Colin likes football. He likes football to the exclusion of just about anything else in fact. He's got an Amiga on which he likes playing football games. In between watching matches he occasionally does a bit of news editing for New Computer Express.

RICH PELLEY

Long time YS and occasional Zero contributor, Rich claims not to have many interests. 'I like going out, I s'pose,' he eventually offers, 'but I like coming back in again too'. In actual fact, his life revolves around baggy trousers, bands like The Stone Roses and The Happy Mondays and chasing chicks (an activity at which, we have to admit, he shows a remarkable degree of success).

ANDY IDE

A bit of a sex beast, Andy likes films ('my favourite is Piranha by Joe Danté'), Frank Zappa, food ('my favourite meal is muscles and chips with mayo'), being 26, editing Your Sinclair (he took over from Matt in fact), and breasts. A man of diverse tastes.

JONATHAN DAVIES

The strong, silent type, Jonathan, erm...actually, there isn't that much to write about Jonathan. He's just 'there.' He lives in Herne Bay, goes to 'uni', plays computer games even though he doesn't like any of them very much ('It's okay, I suppose,' is high praise from him indeed) and is contemplating a career as an actor.

TREVOR GILHAM

There's one thing they always say about Trevor – he's the 'unsung hero' of British computer magazines. He's designed an awful lot of mags, that's for sure, including Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, ST Format, Amiga Format and the original version of ACE. He likes playing football, watching Arsenal and 'anything Japanese'.

MATTHEW WILLIAMS

Stridently heterosexual (and he doesn't care who knows it), Matthew fancies himself as quite a photographer (his pictures appeared in a show during Leicestershire Art Week), has just given up weight training, and likes British cinema. He thinks that he might be quite into surfing too, but he hasn't actually done any yet.

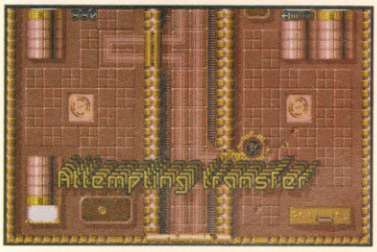
BRAYBROOK – BLOWING HOT AND COLD

Legendary designer/programmer Andrew Braybrook is currently working on an unusual (and rather innovative) new arcade-style run 'n' jump romp called *Fire And Ice*.

Unusual? Well, for a start the star of *Fire And Ice* is a dog. Of sorts. A large, furry, floppy sort of dog, in fact, on mission to save his puppy children from the arrival of the horrible Fire Creatures. This isn't a rescue mission, as you might expect, but in fact takes the form of a sort of exodus, with our cuddly canine chum leading his pups away from their Arctic home, across the world, and towards a confrontation with the being responsible for this invasion.

Fortunately for our furry, floppy-eared friend the ferocious Fire Creatures are, by and large, nocturnal. The planet's natural inhabitants on the other hand are not. Fuelled by fear, the cowardly critters spend a lot of the game trying to kidnap stray puppies to give to the Fire Creatures in exchange for peace. And so it goes.

As our hairy hero makes his way from Arctic



Paradroid 90 **– Braybrook's last hit, and an Amiga Power All-Time Top 100 game. (Top 30, in fact!)**

conditions, across mountainous terrain and through deep jungles towards his foe, he finds he has to take on all manner of puppy-loving pests, which he does using some handy ice weaponry. In fact, ice proves to be a multi-purpose tool, coming in useful when negotiating various physical obstacles too.

Andrew, who has been responsible for many Commodore 64 classics and recently enjoyed chart success with the Amiga game *Paradroid 90*, isn't blowing hot and cold about *Fire And Ice*. In fact, he's rather confident.

'I want everything in the game to be alive,' he told us. 'Even the bonuses run off if you leave them for too long. Natural forces play an important part too. It'll have a realistic feel to it, with proper contoured landscapes where you can roll things down hills and everything moves faster going downhill than up. In a way I'm trying to mirror real life physics, but without the boring bits.'

Expect a September release from Image Works.

THE AMIGA POWER ROCK-HARD ANSWERS Oh dear, oh dear. Couldn't do them, eh? Well, don't worry – we're not going to hold it against you. (Just pull yourself together for next month's quiz, okay?) 1) *Ikari Warriors* (Elite) 2) *Crack Down* (US Gold) 3) *Narc* (Ocean) 4) *Bonanza Bros* (will be US Gold) 5) *Bubble Bobble* (Firebird)

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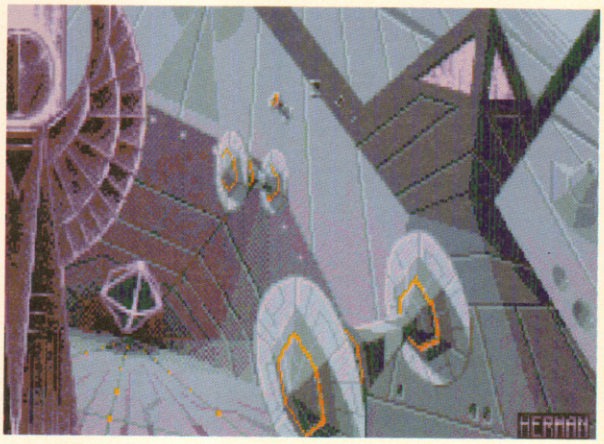
THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF COMMODORE IN ALL OF US

GAMES OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the Games Of The Month section, 24 pages covering the best and most interesting games in the greatest detail. For full details of our scoring system see page 80, but as a quick tip bear in mind you won't see the sort of high scores you might expect from other mags. After all, if you give everything 70 or 80 percent the whole concept of scoring gradually begins to mean nothing very much at all...

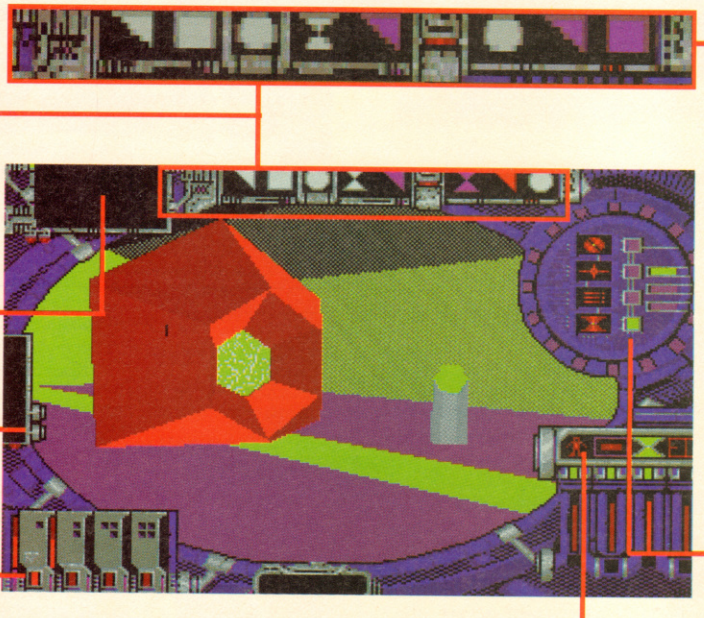
The people who brought you the sci-fi epic *Interphase* are back, with more puzzles, more



CYBERCO

Game	**Cybercon III**
Publisher	**US Gold**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**The Assembly Line**
Release Date	**Early May**

You'd think that by the 21st century people would have realised that if you build a giant computer and put it in charge of all your defence systems, it's a dead cert that within minutes it'll have gone haywire and taken over the world. But no such luck. So with a naivety founded upon years of sniffing dodgy test-tubes, the Democratic Union's scientists built a giant computer and put it in charge of all their defence systems. And with painful inevitablilty it went haywire and took over the world. Ho hum. But, as if that wasn't bad enough, it decided that to be on the safe side it had better kill everybody. So it did. Apart, that is, from you and a bunch of resistance-type chums who've decided to save the world by getting inside the computer and blowing it to kingdom come first. Sounds like a tall order. Well, it's a dirty job, but some gullible schmuck's got to do it.



Icon Strip: This thing across the top there that we've blown up big so you can see it better. Depending on what else you've got activated, this'll either show your inventory (you can carry up to 16 objects at once) or the sonic key codes that you have at your disposal. This pretty useless looking mess of shapes is in fact your sonic key codes – check out the annotations over on the other side for how these work.

Camera Display: Shows the picture from whichever camera is currently selected (if you've got any).

Gyrocompass: Thisshow which way you're pointing (in case you get a bit confused).

Energy Cells: This section displays the energy level of your main power cell and those of any back-up cells you may be carrying. You can also switch cells on and off here. The more cells you have switched in at once the better the AP will respond to the controls.

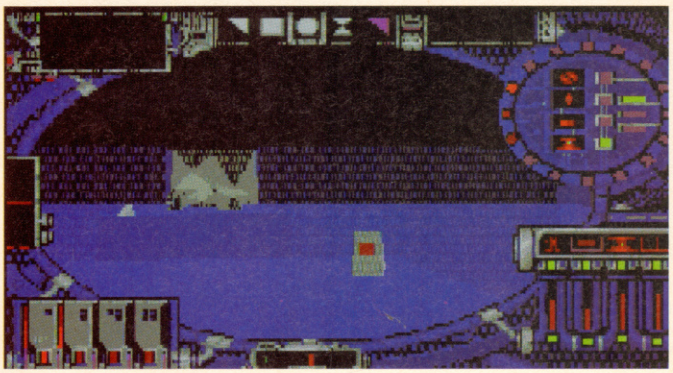
Primary Management System: Here's where you switch on and off the PA's five main systems (Power Assist, Shields, Weapons, Auto Repair and Surveillance), monitor their energy levels and so on. If you start running low on energy it might be a good idea to shut down any non-essentials until you get a bit more healthy..

If you're planning on going through any locked doors, using lifts or activating cameras, consoles or other important objects you'll need a sonic key. It's a bit like one of those things they have on Renault adverts for unlocking their cars, only a whole lot more sophisticated. For a start it's programmable – load it with up to three of the symbols in your icon strip, point it at a door and (if the code's right) the door will open. Alternatively, point it at something and press the `interrogate' button and it'll try to extract the code for you. (Nicking a Renault in the 21st century would be a doddle.) You only start out with a few symbols and have to collect more as you go on.

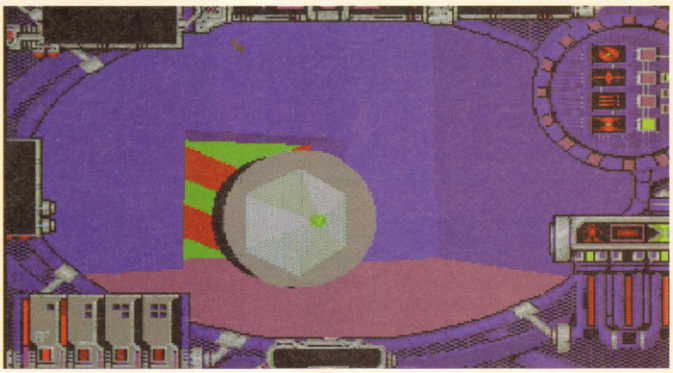
Sonic Key Status: This bit's where you load codes into the key and where codes appear when you interrogate something.

Secondary System Display: Slightly complicated, this. It's got three modes which you can cycle between: Weapon Selection (where you can choose between three weapons or the sonic key), Camera Selection (where you pick the camera to be displayed) and Camera Movement (which lets you wiggle the cameras about and zoom them in and out).

stunning solid 3D – and a computer that wants to control the world!

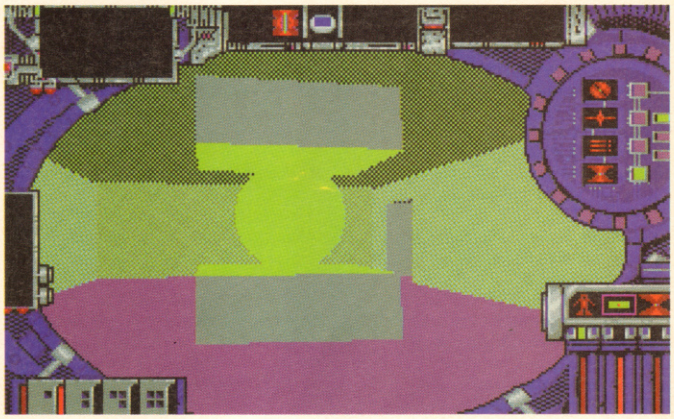


Jumping over that chasm might prove a little beyond your capabilities. A more successful route might be to interrogate the terminal device, just ahead. With the right code combination (or simply a lot of luck) you might find the chasm bridged.



Oops. Looks like we've come face to wheel with a security patrol droid. These ones are fairly easy to overcome, however. If your energy is low there is a way to avoid confrontation – simply remain stationary, and the droid won't be able to detect you.

N III



One of the best things about Cybercon III is simply wandering around the complex and trying to work out what everything is. What could this thing be, d'you think?

THE HEART OF THE MACHINE

Not much is known about *Cybercon III*. Except its name, obviously. And the fact that it's buried deep in the heart of Mount Adam and is very heavily defended. Oh, and another thing: there's an entrance on one side of the mountain that the computer's defences don't seem to know about – a sort of `blind spot'. It might be possible to slip one man in unnoticed. (Guess who). Fortunately a suit of power armour has been captured from *Cybercon III* that'll make it a lot safer to explore the complex, so you strap it on, put the finishing touches to your last will and testament and step through the entrance, which closes firmly behind you.

Well, that's the plot. What's the game all about? The screen-shots are a bit of a giveaway, to tell the truth. It's pretty clear that we're dealing with a 3D exploration and puzzle-solving game, with the vague possibility of one or two things to shoot. Your objective is to locate the Brain Stem at the heart of the complex and take it out, or, failing that, to shut down the force-field surrounding the complex to make an assault easier. That's going to mean solving some pretty devious puzzles while fighting off the complex's range of automatic defences.

'IT MANAGES TO CREATE A VERY CONVINCING "WORLD INSIDE YOUR AMIGA"'

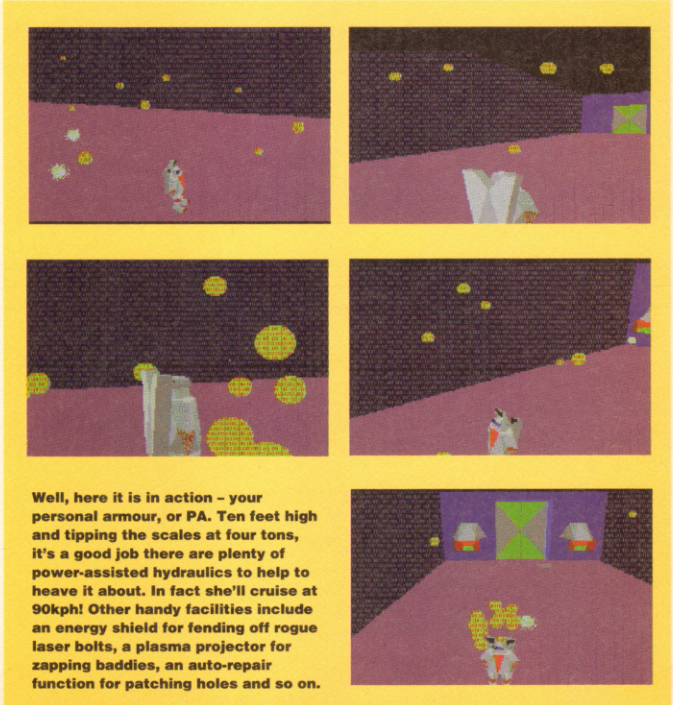
ONE SINGLE, COMPLEX ENTITY

There's plenty to gawp at in *Cybercon III*, its graphics being its most outstanding feature. Not only are they fast and slick, putting Freescape games, like *Driller*, to shame, but they're also colourful (lighting-up things really seem to glow, while the general decor is very tasteful and atmospheric) and complicated (there are all sorts of strange machines in some places). After travelling around a bit you'll find that, rather than being split up into distinct rooms, the complex is very much one entity (if you see what I mean). You can look through the door of one room and see whatever lies ahead. And in some really large rooms, sort of 'hallways', you can look around and see for miles in all directions, so agrophobics beware. Some areas also have transparent floors which you can stand on and look into the bits →

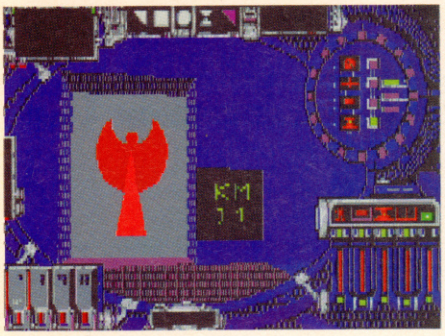
THE WORLD WITH CYBERCON III IN CHARGE

- Everyone's got to be in bed 8.00.
- The poll tax has been brought back (and doubled).
- You're not allowed to have long hair (even if you're a girl).
- There's no: white bread, soft loo paper Sunday colour supplements.
- Neighbours is only on once a day (at lunchtime when everyone's at work).
- The only ice-cream you can get is vanilla.
- Everyone's on the Readers' Digest mailing list twice.

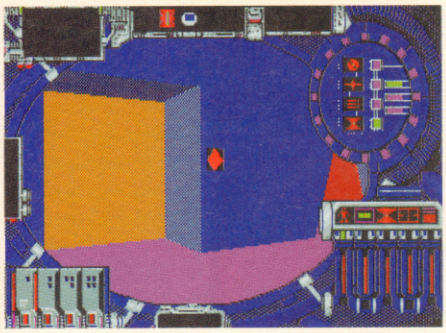
As you can probably see, something needs to be done. (And fast.)



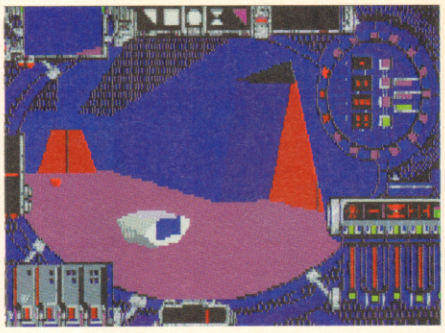
Well, here it is in action – your personal armour, or PA. Ten feet high and tipping the scales at four tons, it's a good job there are plenty of power-assisted hydraulics to help to heave it about. In fact she'll cruise at 90kph! Other handy facilities include an energy shield for fending off rogue laser bolts, a plasma projector for zapping baddies, an auto-repair function for patching holes and so on.



The only way you'll be able to save your position is by going into a special `save game' room. And to get out again you'll need your sonic key and the slinky black anti-piracy wheel supplied with the game.



Ladies underwear? 'Fraid not. It's `electrical' on every floor. Just tap in the code for the one you want and you'll be whisked there in seconds (assuming you've got the right symbols, otherwise nothing will happen at all).



Up to four cameras can be dropped anywhere you like so you can keep a track on things. They're handy for covering your rear, but can't move under their own steam. 'Parrot' cameras are better – they can!

STRANGE WORDS WITH THE BOYS AT THE ASSEMBLY LINE

Top programmers The Assembly Line are the team responsible for a long line of critically acclaimed Amiga games, including *Pipe Mania*, *Interphase*, *E-Motion*, *Vaxine* and *Exterminator*. With *Cybercon III* it looks like the boys are set for another hit, so Stuart tracked them down to a country mansion in a forest near Bristol and asked, nay, demanded that they answer a few taxing questions for us. Unfortunately they made him promise not to ask them any questions about polygons or (indeed) programming in general. A bit of a blow). Instead then, here's what he managed to come up with...

STUART: So, why are you called 'The Assembly Line'? It hardly seems appropriate given all the different sorts of game you've produced.

JOHN DALE: Well, the alternative was 'Hand Cranked Software', so I think the reason is obvious.

STUART: With your impeccable track record, have you thought about making the break from just programming and moving into publishing for yourselves, like, say, the Bitmap Bros or The Sales Curve?

ANDY BEVERIDGE: No, we're fine as we are. Now that we've got a few hits as a team under our belts, we're getting a very fair deal from outside publishers. We don't need the extra hassle.

STUART: Well, that's enough of the techie stuff. Who's your favourite member of the Sugarcubes?

ADRIAN STEPHENS: I think for me it has to be that cute girl singer, what's her name?
JOHN: Yes, it's Bjork for me too. I think it's the cardigans.

STUART: If you were offered five million pounds in cash, on the understanding that if you accepted you would cause a Chinaman somewhere in China to fall off his bicycle and die, would you take the money?

ADRIAN: Oh yes.
ANDY: Yep. I think most people would.
RICARDO PINTO: Yes, but I'd use the money to set up a benefit fund for Chinese widows.
JOHN: Mm, I'd donate at least a tenner to that.

STUART: How would you replace the Poll Tax?

ADRIAN: Well, whatever it is has to be means-tested in some way. I think a local income tax is probably the best bet.
RICARDO: I agree. I don't have any problem with people with more money contributing more to the running of the community.
JOHN: Local income tax is fair and collectable, but it could prove to be something of an administrative nightmare unless you control it from central government, which rather defeats the object of the exercise.
ANDY: Actually, I thought the old rates were fine.

STUART: Do you think the CIA were implicated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy?

JOHN: Undoubtedly.
ANDY: Absolutely.
ADRIAN: Definitely.
RICARDO: Yes.

STUART: Who's the best psychologist, Pavlov or Jung?

JOHN: It has to be Jung, some of the experiments Pavlov did on dogs with hormones and rubber tubing were quite despicable.
ADRIAN: Jung, because I don't like meringues.

STUART: Finally, as a whole, do you think we should run any more interviews like this, or do you think we should do sensible ones?

ASSEMBLY LINE: Well, it made a nice change, but I doubt if it'll catch on...

ASSEMBLY LINE: It's a pleasure.■

below, sometimes a very long way below – eek! For an even more dramatic effect, try looking out through the door of a lift on the move and watch the scenery whizzing past. One thing's for sure: it'll be a nightmare to map.

There are all sorts of baddies to shoot, too, using your built-in plasma projector or any other weapons you manage to find. There are two main types of nasty: the Cyber-Wheel, which comes in all shapes and sizes and mainly seems to be concerned with maintaining the complex so it isn't too hard to destroy, and the Nemesis, a short-tempered defence droid which is best steered clear of to start with. If you're really cunning you'll find the machines which make these droids and nail the problem at its source. But watch out for the stationary gun turrets which have a habit of lurking round corners and zapping you while your shields are down.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Cybercon III is state-of-the-art as far as games go, and even if you don't have much luck with the puzzles there's plenty of fun to be had exploring the playing area and taking out robots. The 3D is certainly some of the best we've seen – bright, colourful and smooth – and it certainly manages to create a very convincing 'world inside your Amiga' (which seems to me to be a lot more fun than the one outside it). Just be careful you don't get sucked into some kind of weird time-warp and get trapped inside it. The real world might be less fun, but you don't get shot at as much.■
Jonathan Davies

UPPERS The best solid 3D graphics yet, a huge playing area, hard puzzles and things to shoot too, plenty of variety and a genuinely spooky sense of actually 'being there'.

DOWNERS Takes a while to get to grips with the controls. No sound on 512k machines, and the facility for saving games is a bit crap.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A deeply serious, immensly playable and generally enormous 3D explore-'em-up that's quite possibly the only game you'll need to buy this year.

88 PERCENT

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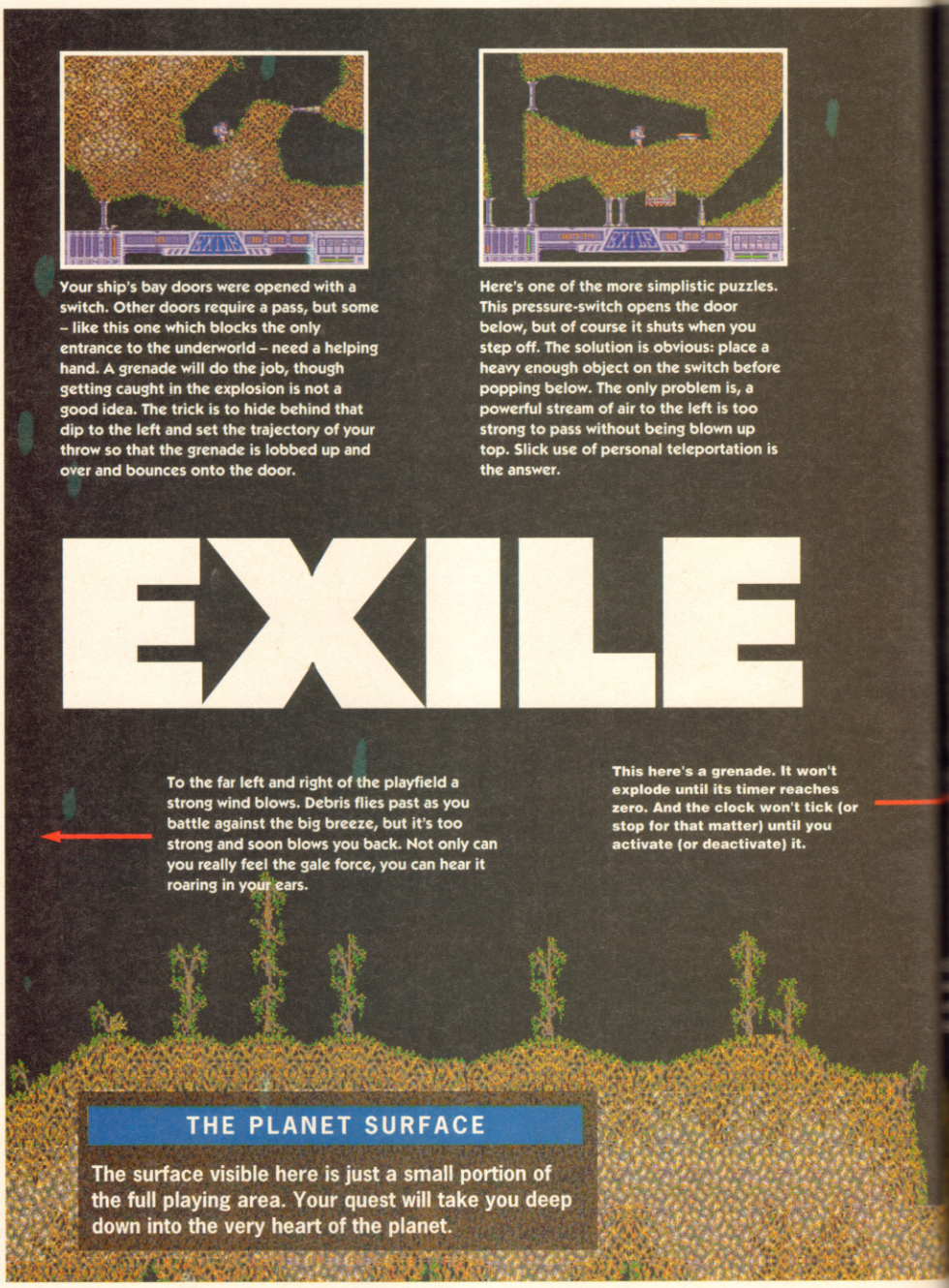
Game	**Exile**
Publisher	**Audiogenic**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Peter Irvin, William Reeve, Jeremy Smith**
Release Date	**End of April**

Don't turn the page! Beneath these decidedly average graphics lurks not only an enthralling game but the nearest thing to an 'every- day life



Your ship's bay doors were opened with a switch. Other doors require a pass, but some – like this one which blocks the only entrance to the underworld – need a helping hand. A grenade will do the job, though getting caught in the explosion is not a good idea. The trick is to hide behind that dip to the left and set the trajectory of your throw so that the grenade is lobbed up and over and bounces onto the door.

Here's one of the more simplistic puzzles. This pressure-switch opens the door below, but of course it shuts when you step off. The solution is obvious: place a heavy enough object on the switch before popping below. The only problem is, a powerful stream of air to the left is too strong to pass without being blown up top. Slick use of personal teleportation is the answer.

Arcade adventures were all the rage once. Seems like only yesterday when you couldn't move for the things – arcadey ones like *Sabre Wulf* and *Ant Attack*, or more cerebral ones like *Dragontorc* and *Avalon*. *Seems* like only yesterday, but in actual fact most of us haven't done much maze-mapping and object collecting in years. Not since the days of C64s and Spectrums really – for some reason a lack of interest in arcade adventures and the rise of 16-bit computers coincided, and precious few ever made it over to the Amiga.

No, arcade adventures are certainly 'out' just now. And 'in'? Well 'in' seems to be the Sierra/Delphine/Lucasfilm film-like adventure approach, which more or less totally abandon the arcade aspect altogether. That's one way of doing it, sure, and certainly one that's more accessible than most text-only efforts, but there's only so much room on a disk for pretty pictures, and invariably interaction is restricted so that the task seems a little too linear.

Which is where *Exile* comes in. Yes, it's got arcade bits, yes, it forms an intriguing adventure, yes, there are lots of graphics and yes (and this is the big one) there is an awful lot to do and see – the task in hand is anything but too linear. What this actually represents is a successful marriage between the cream of text-based adventures and the arcade-style shoot-'em-up. To all intents and purposes it's the first in what will hopefully become a new breed of decidedly modern arcade adventure.

'WHAT THIS ACTUALLY REPRESENTS IS A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE CREAM OF TEXT-BASED ADVENTURES AND THE ARCADE-STYLE SHOOT-'EM-UP.'

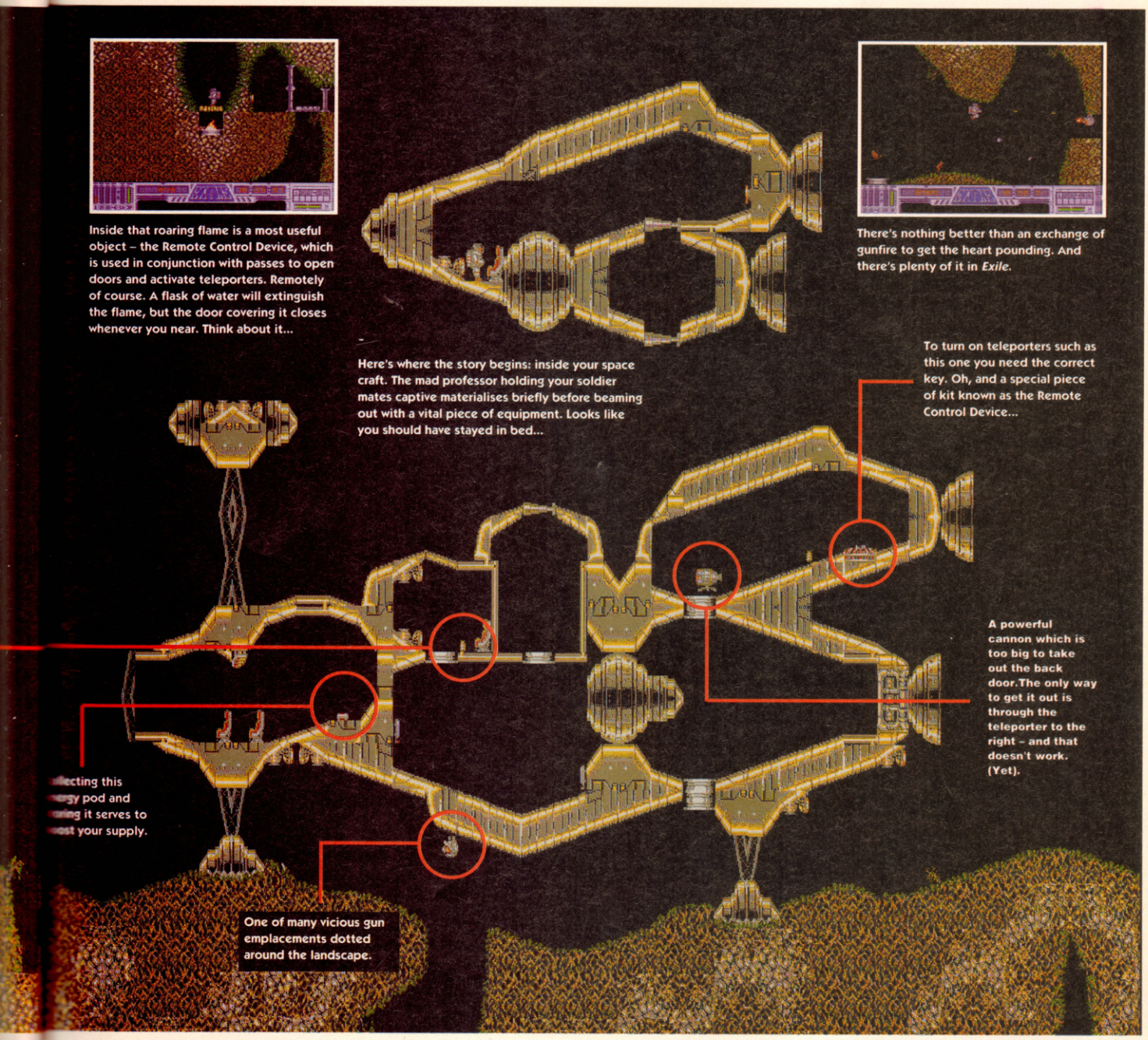
So as you'd expect, *Exile* has a sizable map to explore, packed with generous helpings of action and a goodly number of objects to collect and use. Nothing wrong with that, but it's all fairly unremarkable – what makes *Exile* so dreamy is the way in which it so successfully mimics the real world while artfully missing out all the dreary bits. Step away from it a second and look at it from another angle – where before have you been able to interact so effectively with your environment? Not in another game, that's for sure. No, it may sound overblown, but in many ways *Exile* effectively acts as a simulation of everyday life on an Earth-like planet.

It's because everything in the game obeys the laws of physics to realistic effect. It's because every object has its own mass and so, when combined with the gravitational pull of the world, a host of swish inertial effects can be experienced by the player. It's because if you want – and I'd recommend it to anybody – you can forget about the big task in hand for a bit and immerse yourself in the simple challenge of trying to fly about the place holding a flask full of water in one hand without spilling a drop.

As you might have guessed from that last sentence (the word 'holding' was the giveaway) you don't control a ship or a robot in *Exile*, but a lone space soldier. This guy has to be one of the most versatile computer characters ever seen. Initially equipped with just his bare hands, a jetpack, and a protective suit with four 'pockets' (objects small enough to fit in these can be stored for later use), he can run, jump and fly in pretty much any direction. Not only that, he can duck, pick up and drop items, throw objects or shoot in a definable trajectory (which is especially handy when it comes to lobbing grenades) and all sorts of other stuff too.

Of course, despite my efforts to persuade you to the contrary, *Exile* isn't really a simulation at all, it's a game, and as such it contains certain chores that you must set out to complete. Your task is to rescue a handful of fellow space soldiers from where they're trapped by a mad professor deep within a vast network of underground caverns. The playing area is proportionally half a mile square, and the number of puzzles to solve is... well, it's difficult to quantify, as most of the problems come about through the unique way objects interact with each other. Let's just say there are an awful (awful) lot.

Further emphasising that it's actually a game we're talking about here, points are awarded for every kill made and for



simulator' yet seen. Audiogenic have re-invented the arcade adventure – and it works!

ON THE OTHER HAND... Hmm. I don't know quite where to start really. This reminds me of an old Commodore 64 game. The control and layout feels a lot like *Thrust*, it's very cute and appealing in places, it's very big and it has a nice feel to it.

Don't get me wrong – I like the game. But the future of arcade adventures? An educational tool? Come on. I can't for the life of me see quite why Gary's gone so overboard about it, and am desperate for him to really sit down and explain it to me. I'm coming at this with an open mind, I'm willing to be persuaded, but on a first look (and from the admittedly fairly small amount of playing time I've given it) I can't quite see what all the fuss is about. It's good, it's fun, but for my money it's not really worth much more than...

80 percent – Matt Bielby

performing certain tasks, though of course the pleasure gathered from making a discovery or actually solving a problem is the far greater incentive. It's almost as if the programmers are aware of the temptation *Exile* gives to abandon the job in hand and zoom off and explore in another direction for a bit – to ensure players keep on the move, and to instil a sense of urgency, a point is lost for every second which passes.

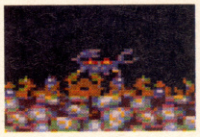
As you make your way around in *Exile*, you'll find there are three problems that keep coming up. Firstly, how do you keep your energy level high and how do you ensure you've got the right weapons for the job? Secondly, just how are you meant to interact with all the animals you keep encountering? And thirdly, just how are you meant to get about the place anyway? Let's deal with them all one at a time, shall we?

A SMALL MATTER OF ENERGY

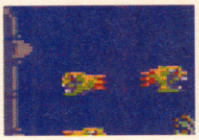
There's this to consider of course. Your jetpack needs it, as do your guns. Ah yes – the guns. The first of many weapons – you don't come equipped with any to start with, remember? – is found just beneath the surface. It's a low-powered handgun →

which is only really effective against the weakest of the planet's inhabitants. Deeper into the caverns there's a second, more powerful handgun waiting to be discovered, along with two meaty (but energy-hungry) blasters. Watch for the recoil though – it's a little on the strong side. (We are talking about a game where you realistically interact with your environment, after all). Meanwhile, back on the surface, a powerful cannon sits inside the wreckage of a ship. The only problem is, just how do you bring it out into the open?

So with all those options you should be alright gun-wise. What you need now is the power to run them on, and fortunately (though the use of energy is realistic in the game, and you do need to keep topping it up) it's never too inhibitive. There are normally plenty of booster packs to be found, and if the worst comes to the worst you can always transfer energy from one device you're carrying to another.



The action hots up when these crabs put a nip in the air...

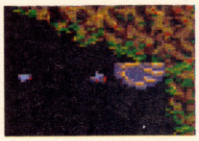


...while the piranha look like rejects from a Joe Dante flick...

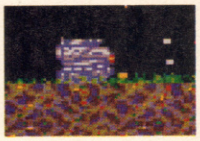
...and the sickeningly cute Fluffy like, erm, a, um, 'bluey-red thing'.

Roasting frogs is all very well, but it won't get you very far...

...though you could trade them with these mischievous imps.



You can't quite see their knees, but this is the bees' hive...



...while this robot shoots first and doesn't bother to ask questions later...

...and this droid could be friend or foe – you can't tell until you meet him.

This annoying bird has a tendency to be lucky on your head...

...while this may not look like it, but is in fact a harmless lemming.

TALKING TO THE ANIMALS

Here's something else to consider – the inhabitants of *Exile*'s world. These have varying degrees of intelligence and spend most of the time going about their own business. Some creatures are scared of newcomers and so attack almost immediately – certain breeds of bird for example – while others tend to keep themselves to themselves until they are interfered with. Don't worry about the killer bees too much, for instance – they'll only go for you if you threaten them (if you start shooting at their hive, for instance). More fearsome are some of the creatures you'll come across in the pools and lakes you discover deeper into the adventure – crabs, giant clams and piranha fish.

One set of creatures you should be especially wary of are the imps. Try picking up a frog or similar and giving it to them – these mischievous monkey-like beings have pouches in which they carry stolen items. I came across a handy stick-like torch and power replenishment packs, and with a bit of persuasion got them to give them to me. Be careful though – they *are* mischievous, and take great delight in throwing things at you, which can be problematic. (The spores from the mushrooms will temporarily block your jetpack, for instance).

Potentially most helpful of all the creatures encountered is Fluffy – a sickeningly cute ball of fluff (no surprises there) who has a tendency to squeak uncontrollably when loud noises such as gunfire disturb him from his usual happy state of eating. He becomes your sort of side-kick with very little persuasion, and can prove very useful indeed – his speciality is squeezing through gaps smaller than you can handle.

Not quite animals, but near enough to warrant inclusion here, are the mobile robot types to occasionally have to contend with. One, called Chatter (and it soon becomes pretty obvious where he got his name from), is actually friendly, and can prove as useful as Fluffy. Feed him with a certain type of crystal (either found lying around or converted by burning mushrooms) and he'll be on your side – one of two whistles can then be used to control Chatter and get him to help you out.

(Incidental note: The imps were in fact monkeys at one point, which explains the way they act, I guess. They were changed after the Japanese saw Exile and went sparky – not surprising when you realise monkeys are in fact sacred in Japan.)

THE SAFER WAY TO TRAVEL

Getting from A to B in such a vast playfield can prove time and energy consuming – and tiring too. That's why the smart hero about town gets around via the many teleporters dotted throughout the caverns. Your good self is not the only thing capable of being teleported. Anything goes: objects, robots, creatures – even bullets. The only problem is, most of the teleporters can only be turned on and off if you are in possession of the relevant pass.

A limited form of teleportation is also built into your suit. It's more of a simplistic position save of sorts really, with the facility to store the coordinates of four 'destinations'. This feature has more use than is at first apparent. For a start, you don't actually die in *Exile* – instead you are teleported back to the last teleport position remembered, or to the default position of your ship orbiting above the planet. Better still, the personal teleportation can be used to pass pushy aliens. By remembering your position before allowing yourself to be pushed away, you can teleport behind the being and continue.

Fortunately, there's also a more fullsome save function – either quickly to RAM or more permanently to floppy disk.

Exile's great strength lies in the fact that you can do pretty much anything you would do in an equivalent real life situation. The lighter the object, the better it floats and the further it can be thrown. Objects or creatures which look as though they should burn do. How should you best go about exploring the underground lakes, for instance? Simple – carry an object heavy enough to make you sink.

Everything seems real, everything works, and this attention to detail seems to be present on almost every level. Sonically it's impressive too – objects make an audible splash when they hit water, and every creature and almost all events have distinctive sounds, with the volume varying depending on the distance between you and the noise. You can hear the bees buzz, the birds squawk, and so on.

The problems you're faced with turn out to be pleasingly logical too. Whether simple mechanical teasers (how to get past the thick sliding doors, say) or slightly more complicated biological ones (how to cope with the poisonous mushrooms) the answers actually make sense, rather than seem arbitrarily placed there.

Exile even has educational potential. Learning with textbooks can be dull at the best of times, but with a model such as this you can actually go around and do things for yourself – introduce chemical *x* to chemical *y* for instance, and witness the reaction – and learn through enjoyment. *Exile* promotes experimentation without having to deal with a ho-hum series of windows or pull-down menus.

But pretentious possibilities aside, *Exile* is a bit tasty and no mistake. It's entertaining, highly rewarding and so involved that you won't get through it in a hurry. Apparently, it takes the authors around six hours to play from beginning to end – and they know it inside out.

So where does that leave us? Well, with a new sort of arcade adventure – better than the last one, and opening hundreds of possibilities for the future. The arcade adventure is dead. Long live *Exile*.

■ *Gary Penn*

UPPERS A massive playing area, packed with things to discover and do, smashing sound effects and a glorious control mode, What makes *Exile* really special though is the way 'real world' physics and realistic creature behaviour have been implemented.

DOWNERS Wel, let's face it, it's no oil painting. Occasionally you may find it's not always all that easy to figure out what to do.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Beyond being simply a very good game, *Exile* represents the future of arcade adventures. There's nothing quite like it available, though if there's any justice there'll be loads in the years to come.

89 PERCENT

THE MEN IN EXILE

Jeremy Smith

So who are those three names behind *Exile*? Surprisingly, between them they have had little commercial success. Jeremy Smith wrote Firebird's *Thrust* (an 'official' tribute to which appeared as *Zarathrusta* from the late Hewson recently), but Peter Irvin on the other hand – well, he's only ever written an ancient (but rather corky) shoot-'em-up called *Starship Command* for the BBC.

The long-standing Irvin/Smith friendship flourished into a partnership when they decided to write a game from scratch. From this, *Exile* originated on the BBC and was converted to the Commodore 64. William Reeve then reproduced the C64 version on the Amiga before Peter rewrote it to take fuller advantage of the new machine.

***Exile* has taken a year to reproduce and enhance on the Amiga, partly because Peter had to learn about the Amiga from scratch, but also because 'You lose inspiration after a while. After about six months or so it all starts to slow down.'**

It didn't help that the ideas behind *Exile* weren't particularly clearly thought out at first, either.

'It started off basically with just the concept of some spaceman flying around and having collisions with real forces and creatures bouncing off each other,' Peter reveals. 'We designed the game around it from there. It evolved very slowly – only later did we realise it should be totally modelled on real life. It's one of those games which, having written it, if you were to write it again you could do it an awful lot faster.'

Peter Irwin

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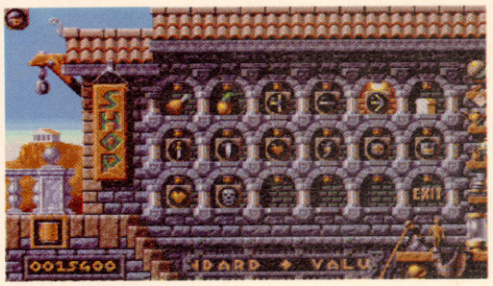
Game	**Gods**
Publisher	**Renegade**
Price	**£25.53**
Programmer(s)	**Bitmap Bros**
Release Date	**Out now**

There has been a lot written about *Gods*. A lot of very complimentary stuff. As complimentary in fact as the reviews of *Speedball 2*, and *Cadaver*, and, indeed, just about everything the Bitmaps have ever done. It's easy to see why everyone goes such a bundle on them too – exceptionally slick presentation, some neat ideas, the strongest image of any team, and a knack of updating old ideas in the cleverest ways. They're the nearest thing to a sure thing this industry's got – always producing games that're good to look at, interesting to play, but never too unusual, and never taking too much of a commercial risk.

There's a downside to this as well though – for a team that spends so much time talking about the importance of the creative process, the evils of licensing and so on, they're conspicuous in that they've never actually produced anything all that, well, original. Where's their *Populous*? Where's their *Dungeon Master*? Where's their *Lemmings*? It's not here, that's for sure. Maybe it'll come with time.

So, then. *Gods*. And yes, there's no denying it – it's a very good game indeed. Well up to the standards we've come to expect in fact, and I'm sure improving on their old stuff in a lot of tiny but significant ways. It certainly looks gorgeous – packed with incredibly detailed backdrops and lots of (usually) well animated little sprites. It's perhaps a little too detailed at times (your character often gets a bit camouflaged against the wealth of background detail) and it would be nice to see a move away from this trademarked metallic look, but visually it is a bit of a stunner. It would be carping outrageously to try and claim anything different.

It sounds nice too – the soundtrack this time is by Nation 12, a more obscure Rhythm King act perhaps, but they do the job very nicely indeed. John Foxx (ex-Ultravox) is one of the names behind them, and since they did the *Speedball 2* music you'll know more or less what to expect. Richard Joseph, who does much of the Bitmaps sound, contributed the in-game noises, and very clattery and realistic they are too.



Entering the almost obligatory shop in *Gods*. Here a range of extra weaponry, energy and magical power-ups can be purchased. (Don't worry if you can't afford what you want – you'll find much of the same stuff just lying around later on). And yes, it *does* feel much like the same scene in *Xenon 2*.

And then there's the game style. Visually it's an arcade-style platform hack-'em-up, sort of like *Black Tiger* (which it's been compared to a number of times) but like plenty of other games too. That's not the full story though – there's enough puzzle solving, door opening, switch throwing and object collecting here to push it firmly into arcade adventure territory. It's an intelligent sort of an action game, then – particularly when you realise that the whole thing revolves around some very clever artificial intelligence routines that make the baddies act in some decidedly peculiar ways. Interesting stuff, but we'll get onto all that in a minute. There are a few other things to discuss first, like, for instance...

A TRULY ANCIENT PLOT

The plot. Ah, yes. This seems to be based on ancient Greek myth (hardly an untapped area in computer games, it's true) though the specifics seem to have been played rather fast and loose with. Our hero may or may not be Hercules – at one point it was suggested that the game was built around his famous series of labours, though this isn't particularly clear from playing it. He may or may not be Hercules for another reason too – he permanently wears a helmet that obscures his face. A bit of a mistake this, I feel – creating a totally characterless central sprite is surely not a Good Thing.

But anyway. The game progresses through four levels, all with different background graphics, and each one divided into three sub-worlds. There are a series of tasks you have to achieve on each one (on the first, for instance, you merely have to collect a green pot and restore it to a store room in the second sub-world) before it lets you go on, though

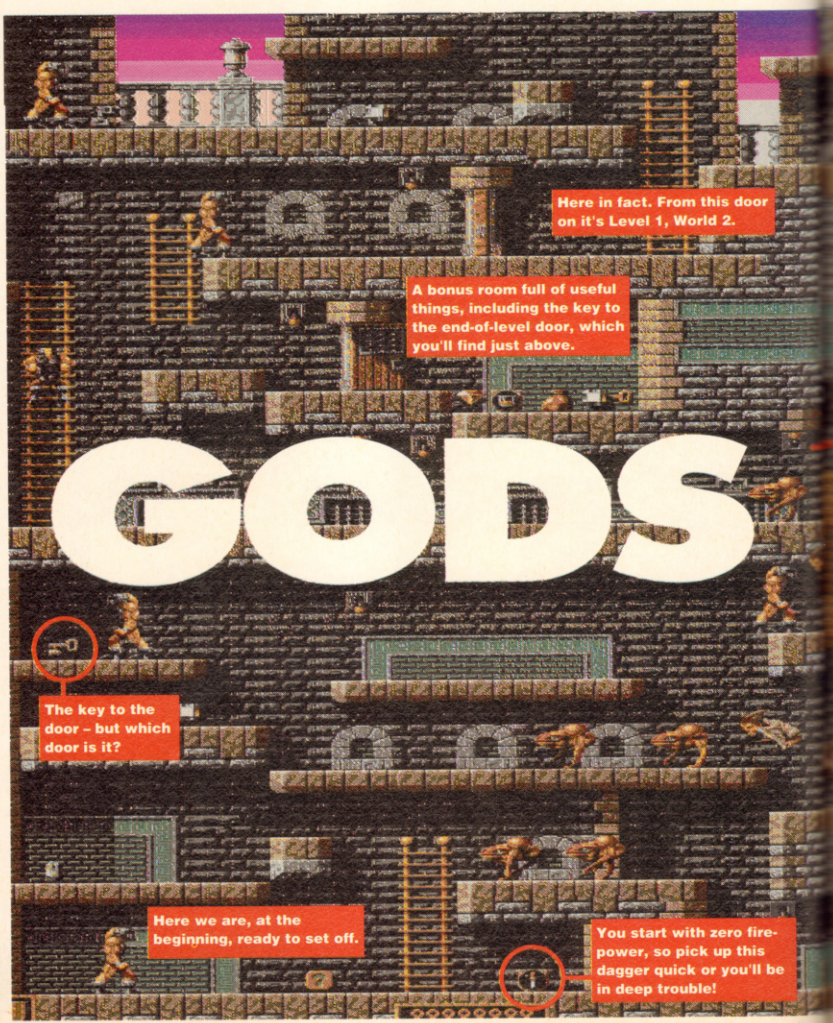
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
(AND WHY YOU MIGHT NOT RECOGNISE IT)

Much has been made of the clever way in which the baddie sprites have a degree of artificial intelligence, and the way the game re-adjusts itself to how well you're playing, making things easier or harder as you go on. It's a good job that much has been made of it too, as you'd never know from actually playing the thing – or at least you wouldn't straight away. The game is so subtle you'd probably only realise something funny was going on when you'd been living with it for a couple of days.

The artificial intelligence first, then. Baddies come in a few sorts – your normal stupid ones, that hang around on platforms or wherever they're put until killed (as you get in most games) – and your super special clever ones. The smartest of these actually know where you are and are perfectly capable of finding the quickest route to you, avoiding your fire (so they have a degree of self preservation built-in) and so on. One variety of clever monster are thieves, which try and steal treasure for themselves, while a lot of the others are more aggressive.

Then there's the player monitoring system. This is even more subtle, in that it judges how well a player's doing and tailors the game to suit. Thus first time round you'll probably find oodles of energy top-ups and bonuses lying around – it'll realise you need them. As you get better though, scoring more points, it'll all get that much tougher.

Renegade's first release, and the Bitmaps' first since *Speedball 2*, has had a lot of publicity



Ooh, bloody hell, how did I get in here? And more importantly, how do I get back out again? Well, the solution involves keys, jugs, and switches (but that's all the help you're getting).

you aren't left totally on your own trying to work out what to do – a window at the bottom of the screen opens and closes throughout, suggesting ways you can earn more points, giving clues on how to get past certain traps and so on.

A GAME OF NICE TOUCHES

Having taken on board the ho-hum plot and unremarkable structure, it's quite hard to define (graphics aside) just what it is that makes the game so nice. Mostly it's things that fall into the 'neat touch' category, and since we're rapidly running out of space here, it might be time to detail some of what I mean.

Neat touch No1 - The end of level baddies are all particularly impressive, even if they don't always seem to do very much. The first one you come across is a sort of giant Centurion type – impressively large (as they all are), though all he really seems to do is walk back and forth a bit. My favourite has to be the massive Minotaur that crops up later on though. Nicely animated, he leaps about the screen and actually makes the entire image shake each time he crashes to earth!

Nice touch No2 - What is apparently background detail – gargoyles and suchlike – actually come to life and attack you as you walk past!

Nice touch No3 - The shop sequences (quite how these became obligatory in action games is beyond me) which work not unlike the ones in *Xenon 2*. Shields, lives, energy and an abundance of weapons – they're all here.

Nice touch No4 The thieves who run about the place, totally oblivious to your good self, collecting treasure and suchlike. Being rather smaller than you are (not to mention invulnerable to the traps) they can often collect keys and so on that you couldn't otherwise reach. If you see one keep an eye on him, wait 'til he collects whatever he's after, then shoot him and pick up what he drops – it's a lot easier than getting it yourself.

Nice touch No5 - Your bird familiar – one of the best add on weapons – who flies around your head and usefully helps out with extra firepower.

Nice touch No6 - The artificial intelligence-cum-player monitoring system – check out the box for details.

So there we have it. Once again, a very professional and well thought out product from the Bitmap Brothers, and destined to become a minor (but only minor, I think) classic. I'd recommend anyone to buy it.

So what's the problem? Well, there is a slight one. It's simply that The Bitmaps have upped the ante with their games enough that 'a very professional looking product' is really the very least we've come to expect. It *is* a clever game, and one of the very best of its type, but it makes you wish for the day when they come up with one that'll make everybody step back three paces and say 'Bloody hell! I wish I'd thought of that!' Eric Bitmap argues that *Speedball* was pretty original, and perhaps he's right, though you could equally argue that it's just American football with metallic graphics. Then again you certainly can't deny they've changed genres with startling regularity – they may have broken little new ground, but equally they haven't been standing still. No, they've proved themselves great at the small innovations, and re-jigging old concepts – what they haven't had is the earth-shattering Original Idea. I wish the Bitmaps and Renegade great success with their first release, but I await the day when they do something a little more unusual.■ *Matt Bielby*

and come backed by some big claims. It's got a lot to live up to – so does it?

UPPERS Lovely graphics, lots of action, nicely-judged puzzles, cleverly intelligent baddies, lots of small innovations and the normal gorgeous Bitmap presentation.

DOWNERS Average subject matter, not as visually/aurally stunning as *Xenon 2*, not as playable as *Speedball 2*.

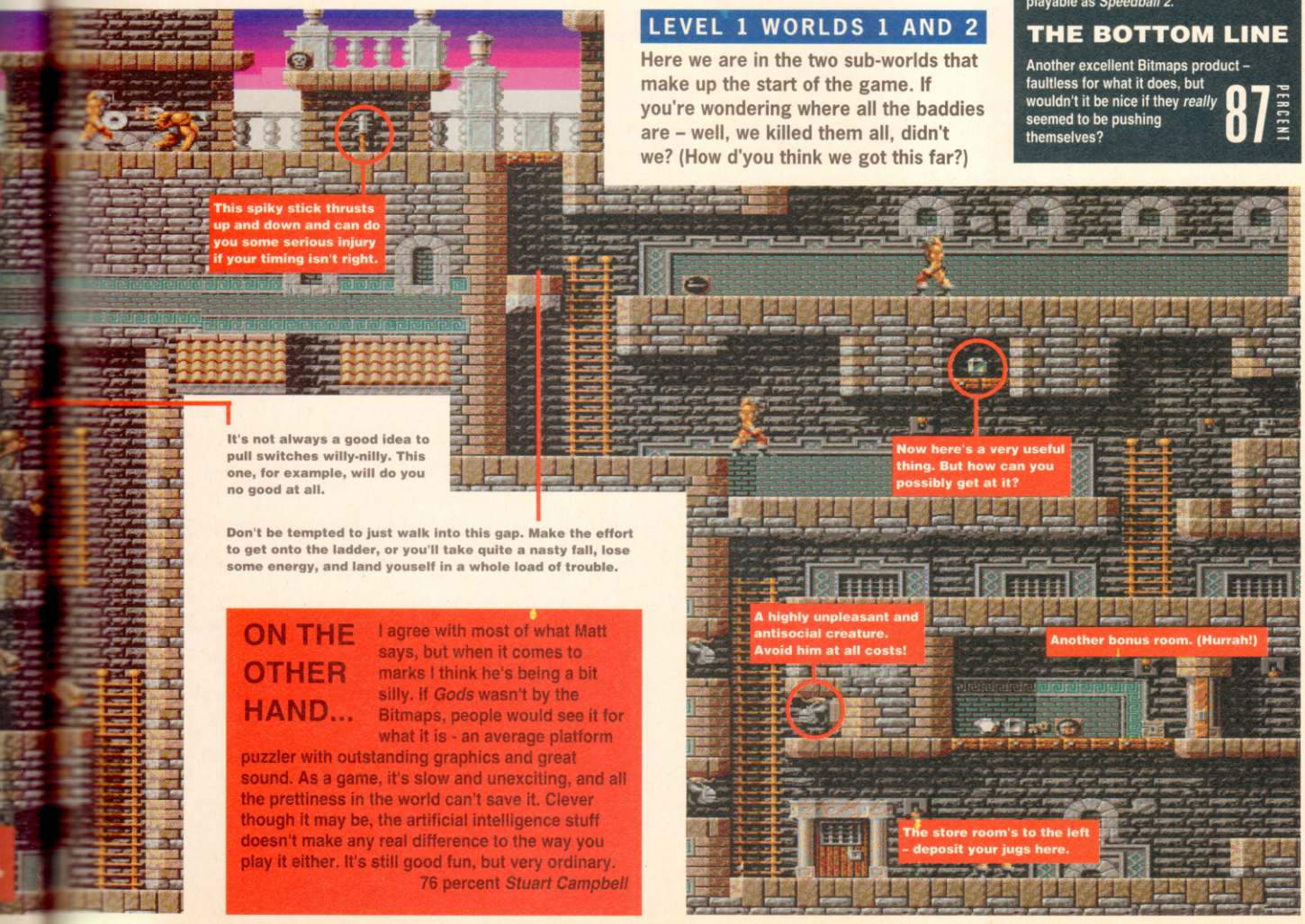
THE BOTTOM LINE

Another excellent Bitmaps product – faultless for what it does, but wouldn't it be nice if they *really* seemed to be pushing themselves?

87 PERCENT

LEVEL 1 WORLDS 1 AND 2

Here we are in the two sub-worlds that make up the start of the game. If you're wondering where all the baddies are – well, we killed them all, didn't we? (How d'you think we got this far?)



ON THE OTHER HAND...

I agree with most of what Matt says, but when it comes to marks I think he's being a bit silly. If *Gods* wasn't by the Bitmaps, people would see it for what it is - an average platform puzzler with outstanding graphics and great sound. As a game, it's slow and unexciting, and all the prettiness in the world can't save it. Clever though it may be, the artificial intelligence stuff doesn't make any real difference to the way you play it either. It's still good fun, but very ordinary.

76 percent *Stuart Campbell*

Remember – it's always an idea to keep track of what the opposition are up to.

Doesn't look like much of a bridge, does it? (Would you believe it cost £200,000!)

As in *Elite*, it can be a good idea to sit back and simply trade back and forth for a while.

you wish (for example, you can chose whether your trains can crash into each other or not, and how competitive all the other railroads are), and you can even select how complex the economy of your chosen country/continent will be. Once you get into the actual game, well, things start to get *really* complicated...

I couldn't hope to explain *Railroad Tycoon* completely without taking up the whole magazine, so it might help if you imagine it as being a bit like the railway-building bits in *Sim City*, except that as well as building the track you have to build

RAILROAD TYC

MicroProse enter the epic strategy game stakes with a title best d

Game	**Railroad Tycoon**
Publisher	**MicroProse**
Price	**£29.99**
Programmer(s)	**Sid Meier**
Release Date	**Early May**

Great Trains In History, Volume One: Stephenson's Rocket. The Cannonball Express. The Flying Scotsman. The Mallard. The Silver Streak. The Orient Express. Ivor The Engine. The Bremen Git. Can you spot the odd train out in this list of timeless classics? Yes, that's right, The Mallard. (None of the others were named after ducks.)

'But hang on', I hear you cry, 'I've never heard of the Bremen Git!' Well, locomotion fans, there's a damn fine reason for that. The Bremen Git exists only in the algorithms of my copy of *Railroad Tycoon*, a new game from everyone's favourite supplier of monster simulation games with inch-thick manuals, MicroProse. And just take a guess, quiz fans, at what kind of a game this is. A cutie platform job perhaps? A coin-op shoot-'em-up conversion? Strip poker? Nope, it's an incredibly involved and complex simulation of the pioneering days of rail travel, covering the whole range of operations from laying track to selling shares, and all points in between. (Did you spot the little railway-type joke there, humour fans?) In fact, *Railroad Tycoon* probably has more depth in its setting-up screens than most games do in their whole code.

IT'S JUST THE TICKET

There are four basic game scenarios (Eastern USA 1830, Western USA 1866, England 1828, or Europe 1900) and you can choose to play at any of four basic difficulty levels (Investor, Financier, Mogul or Tycoon). Within those there are loads of other options which you can combine in any way

As you can see, the budding BR has still got quite a long way to go. I mean, there isn't even a train to Bath yet! (Come to that, there isn't a Bath either). The size and prominence of the various towns and cities varies from game to game – next time Bristol, say, might not be big enough to rate a mention.

The end of the line. In the Europe scenario, to Liverpool is the furthest North you can go.

Deep in the heart of nowhere. The competition haven't bothered building round here, and you'll find there's a reason for that – there's nothing here, so it's not likely to be very lucrative.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Railroad Tycoon is one of those obsessive experiences. If it's the sort of game that will grab you (and I must admit trains are hardly the sexiest of subject matters) then the likelyhood is that you'll be very seriously grabbed. There are problems with it of course – it's not half the game *Sim City* is, for instance, because it'll be so seriously inaccessible to the vast majority of people – but if you've got a lot of time on your hands, if you like getting really embroiled and stuck into something, and if you're impressed by games that seem to have heavily researched their subject matter and used it well, then to you it'll be one of the releases of the year. A genuinely adult game, if not to say positively middle aged (and for once I don't necessarily mean that in a bad way).

87 percent – Matt Bielby

the actual train, make sure it has the right kind of carriages for the cargo it's going to be carrying, build and operate stations and signals, build factories for the train to deliver and collect materials from, lay track to take account of gradients and land values, sell shares in the company but ensure that your competitors don't gain control of it, keep up with technological advances, build bridges and ferries to cross rivers and lakes, cut tunnels through mountains, decide whether to lay single- or double-track lines, and, and.....(cont'd p.94).

COON

t described as *Sim Train*.

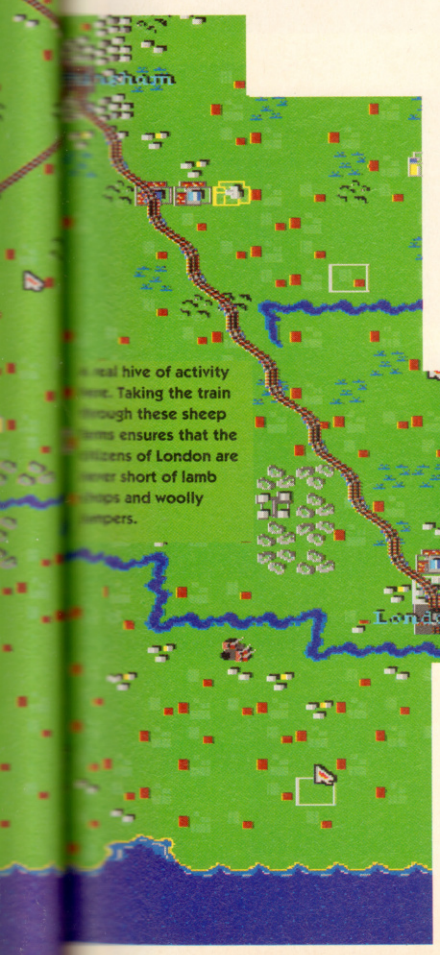
THE END OF THE LINE

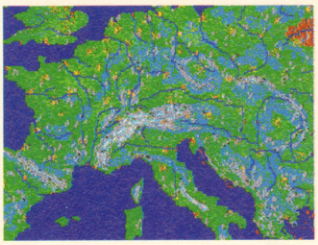
Sounds a bit overwhelming, doesn't it? And frankly, it is. You'll spend many hours at first just shunting passengers and mail back and forth between neighbouring towns – totally ignoring all the other things you really should be keeping tabs on at the same time – but the trouble is that by the time you're ready to expand, you'll be so fed up with the painfully slow play and crummy player interface that you're just as likely to decide not to bother. Quite honestly, there's no excuse whatsoever for a 1 meg Amiga game in 1991 (or a 1K ZX81 game in 1982 for that matter) displaying 'Press any key to continue' when it actually means 'Press Return or we'll be here all day', and that's just one tiny example from the vast list of niggly little things (and there are plenty of them) that don't actually affect the gameplay in any way, but will have you tearing your hair out in sheer annoyance long before the game has had a chance to do itself justice.

'IF YOU LIKED *SIM CITY* BUT FOUND IT JUST A BIT TOO FAST-MOVING, *RAILROAD TYCOON* IS THE GAME FOR YOU'

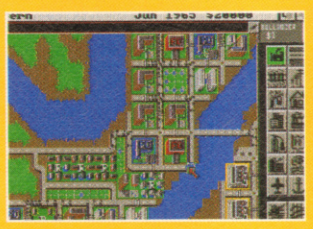
EUROPE 1900

While you were mucking around in Bremen, one of your competitors has already got most of Britain sewn up. Get building!





Playing the Europe scenario. (Nothing like jumping in at the deep end, I suppose).



***Sim City* – cars, buildings, factories, people and (yes!) the odd train too.**

***Railroad Tycoon* – erm, lots of trains. And the odd field. And, um...**

RAILROAD TYCOON vs SIM CITY

Which game *really* impresses in the grand-scale strategy stakes? *Sim City* may have greater variation, but will *Railroad Tycoon*'s depth shine through? Let's see...

SPEED

Sim City – 8
It doesn't exactly go like a rocket (ho ho!) but there's never a dull moment.

Railroad Tycoon – 6
Painfully slow, and switching on Turbo mode just makes things silly (you can't read land information, for instance) without making them noticeably faster.

MEGALOMANIA FACTOR

Sim City – 9
Completely unrivalled control of absolutely everything.

Railroad Tycoon – 6
Great if your idea of total global domination is railways, but lacks the scope for that real feeling of omnipotence.

GENOCIDAL ALIEN MASSACRE RATING

Sim City – 1
Well, at least you get to take on Godzilla now and again.

Railroad Tycoon – 0
A complete alien-free zone.

TRAIN COUNT

Sim City – 4
Quite a few trains, and at least you can have more than one line without needing to link them up.

Railroad Tycoon – 9
Positively awash with locomotives.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Sim City – 22
Railroad Tycoon – 19

There are probably people out there with the patience and placid nature to overcome such minor irritations (in fact, the average train spotter could well fall into this category, which means MicroProse have got everything well sussed after all) but I'm not one of them. If you are, and if you liked *Sim City* but found it just a bit too fast-moving, *Railroad Tycoon* is the game for you. It's just that you'll have to be unemployed or the Duchess Of York to have the time to get into it properly, and some kind of saint not to be driven out of your tree by the sloppiness of the programming while you're doing it. The very best of luck to you. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

UPPERS Utterly vast, you'll certainly get a lot of game for your money. I'm sure it's very rewarding if you stick at it too.

DOWNERS Doesn't even register on the thrill-o-meter, and the graphics and sound are primitive in a major way.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Huge program that'll keep you playing for weeks (but that's partly because it's so slow it'll take you that long to get anywhere). Very shabbily put together too, though good fun despite everything.

79 PERCENT

A GUIDE TO SETTLEMENTS CIRCA 1900

Before you can lay tracks anywhere useful, you'll first have to pay for right of way through these:

Winery	Farm	Coal Mine	Textile Mill	Factory	Vineyard	Chemical Plant	Steel Mill	Sheep Farm
£10,000 per mile	£3000 per mile	£5000 per mile	£10,000 per mile	£20,000 per mile	£10,000 per mile	£15,000 per mile	£15,000 per mile	£5,000 per mile

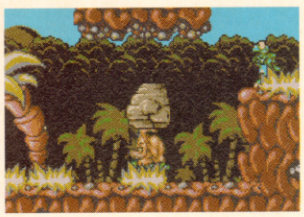
CHUCK ROCK

Game	**Chuck Rock**
Publisher(s)	**Core Design**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Chris Long, Robert Churchill, Lee Pullen**
Release Date	**Out now**

Chuck is a caveman, both historically and socially. So when he hears that the evil Gary 'Gritter' (for this is a game that lets no caveman/rock joke go unexploited) has kidnapped his beautiful wife Ophelia, his first thought is 'So what? There's plenty more women out there, and my trusty club hasn't let me down yet.' But then he realises she hasn't quite finished the washing yet, and that unless he wants to spend the rest of the week wandering around in a soggy loincloth, he'd better do something about it.

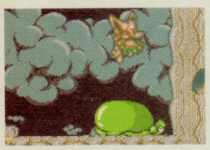
Thus motivated, Chuck sets out on his quest, which turns out to be a lengthy five level trek though every unlikely prehistoric situation the boys at Core could come up with. For the most part the wildlife remains fairly indifferent to our Chuck's plight – some ignore him, some treat him as potential food, but you get the feeling that they're not so much obstacles deliberately set in his path as the natural hazards of a caveman's life. Chuck's by no means totally defenseless though – smaller lizards and the like can be belly-butted out of the way by his not-inconsiderable beergut, flying kicks can come in useful with some of the taller ones, and then of course there are the rocks.

You see, *Chuck Rock* isn't just our hero's name, it's pretty much a description of him too. There are all sorts of boulders lying around the place which he can quite happily pick up and a) throw at animals to squish them, b) use as stepping stones to help him clamber up onto higher platforms, or c) use as a slightly unlikely umbrella to protect himself against the huge boulders which occasionally bounce down the screen for



Chuck demonstrates how he got his name. He's just picked up a rock and – yes! – he's about to 'chuck' it!

Dinosaurs! Hairy elephants! Sabre-toothed tigers! Fred Flintstone meets the



Just bounce on fatso's inflated tum to spring up the screen.

A quick belly-butt here and it's rocket-powered forklift tusk time.

'Boing! Snort! Aatishoo!' Chuck gets jet-propelled elephant-style.

OUT AND ABOUT IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

Handy hints to save Chuck from becoming an extinct species.

Just hop on board for a scenic tour across some of the swampier regions.

Who'd have thought this little bird could carry such a flabby caveman?

Ever wondered why crocodiles have such big flattened snouts?

Right – Watch out for falling stones when climbing those rocky steppes 3 (Asprins aren't due to be invented for another few thousand years.) That large boulder to the right can be picked up, and used later for climbing or squishing a nasty.

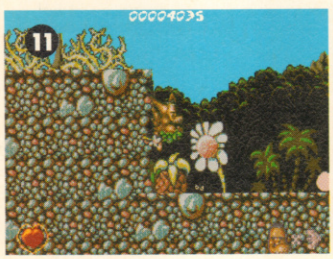
LEVEL 1.2

And so off he goes, hell-bent on traversing yet another sub-level in the search for his beloved Ophelia. There's an awful long way to go, but our Chuck doesn't mind – he's a hard guy. (Hard as a rock in fact.)

RIGHT - Give that grumpy old bird 5 a good nudge with your beer gut, and he'll be only too willing to give you a free airborne trip (in-flight meals not provided).

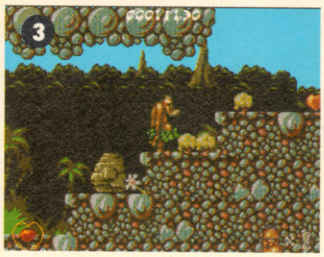
RIGHT - Who says that chemical waste wasn't around when dinosaurs ruled the earth? Watch out for the Dino do-do 6. Not only is it smelly and offensive, it's lethal too.

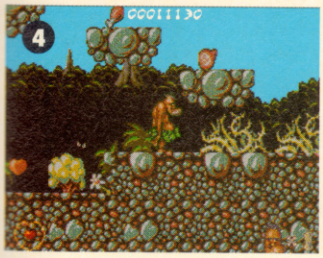
RIGHT - With a leap and a bound, Chuck crosses the chasm. Collect that pig's head 10 for some extra sustenance. (With many prehistoric protaganists yet to be tackled, you'll need it.)

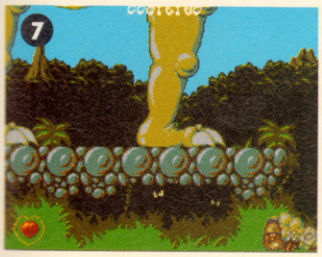


ABOVE - Going up in the world, animal magic style. Drop a rock on that helpful crocodile 12 to sproing you up onto one of the higher platforms.

RIGHT - Hurrah! Chuck completes the sub-level 13. One large step for Chuck, one small step for cavemankind. Of course, there are still untold horrors just waiting to thwart our hero. Luckily, Chuck isn't afraid. (That's because he's stupid.)







THE STORY SO FAR...

Chuck Rock boasts one of the neatest intros around at the moment on the Amiga. Here's a quick synopsis.

Chuck enjoys a few beers in front of the TV, little knowing that...

...the evil Gary Gritter has got his eye on the sweet Ophelia.

Uh-oh. It looks like Ophelia can forget about doing the washing...

...because Gritter's right behind her! Look out! (Thwop!) Too late.

And there he goes, dragging poor Ophie off goodness knows where.

Don't just sit there Chuck, forget the telly and go after them!

Think fast, Chuck! (Not his strongest point, it has to be said).

That's right – follow the birdie's advice (but get some kit on first!)

Mario Brothers in Core's madcap, mammoth platform extravaganza. Rock 'n' Roll.

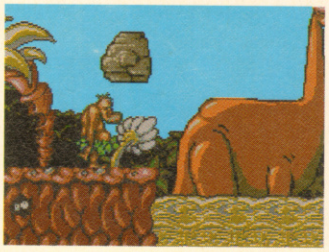
no adequately explored reason. A carefully thrown rock can also trigger off one or two nifty little effects, but more on that later.

Armed with these assorted talents, our neanderthal chum makes light work of the jungles, swamps, icefields and dinosaur

'CHUCK ROCK ISN'T JUST OUR HERO'S NAME, IT'S PRETTY MUCH A DESCRIPTION OF HIM TOO.'

graveyards (each level sub-divided into a number of smaller zones) he must cross to rescue Ophelia – perhaps too light in fact, for this isn't the toughest platform game we've ever come across, with only the huge end-of-level guardians likely to cause most players any real problems.

Lee Pullen, who did the graphics on Core's earlier release *Torvak The Warrior*, has put in some sterling work on the visuals here, to the extent that they positively leap out at you and shout 'play me!' The sprites are absolutely lovely, gorgeously coloured and full of character, and wouldn't look out of place in The Flintstones. They're animated with great care and imagination too – each time you come across a new character it's a bit of a mini-event in itself because you're desperately keen to see 'just what this one does' (and you're rarely disappointed). The BBC's sound library has been raided to good effect too, with brilliant sampled speech and effects providing the game with an audio track definitely worth pumping up the volume for.



Oh dear, oh dear. Chuck really is a stupid sod at the best of times. Watch out for that falling rock, you idiot!

Where Chuck improves on Torvak is that it actually has a decent game hidden under the graphics. Within a pretty basic platform format, it's packed to the brim with original features, well thought out gameplay and nice touches that make it a positive joy to sit down with. In fact, the phrase 'nice touch' could have been invented for this game, with every new prehistoric obstacle bringing a smile to your face.There isn't nearly enough space to list everything I'd like to mention here, but personal favourites include the way Chuck behaves underwater, the crocodile see-saws (who'll sproing you up to a higher platform if you stand on their tales and drop rocks on their heads), the obviously freezing-to-death baddies in the ice levels, the mud monsters (horribly scary, these ones), and the cute little dinosaurs that split into two smaller ones when you bash them, then split again until they're so small they get crushed betwen your toes.

So there we have it really – not the most complicated game in the world, but a decidedly neat one, put together with care and imagination (remember, both Chris Long and Bob Churchill worked on *Rick Dangerous 2*, so you know the level of ambition to expect) and reaching the lofty peaks of playability only normally associated with the best Japanese arcade games. My only real niggle (and it's a slight one) would be that the difficulty level is perhaps pitched just a touch too low (a real surprise when you think it comes from people involved with *Rick 2*!). All the same, for a platform game that you'll keep coming back to again and again, you could much worse than pick up a Rock. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

UPPERS Superb graphics and sound, imaginative gameplay, and more 'neat touches' than you'll find in any ten normal games.

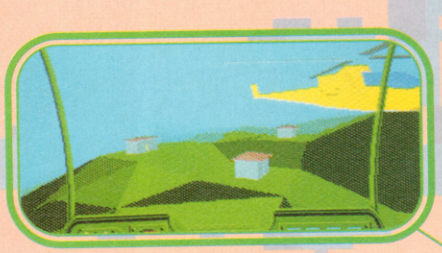
DOWNERS A bit on the easy side perhaps. Getting sent all the way back to the start of a sub-level when you die can be frustrating.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Supremely playable. A brilliant platform game, put together with great care and attention and a feel for character.

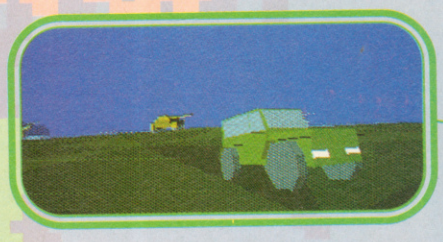
86 PERCENT

FLAMES O

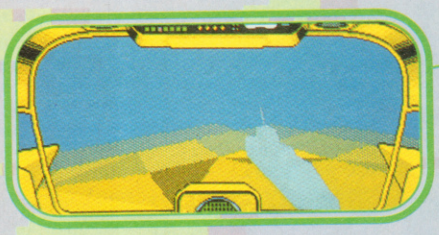


Dogfight with opponents over villages for command of the skies, or attack ground targets which serve the enemy's cause.

Flames of Freedom, the new blockbuster from the creators of Midwinter, offers you total freedom. Freedom of choice, Freedom of action, Freedom of movement.

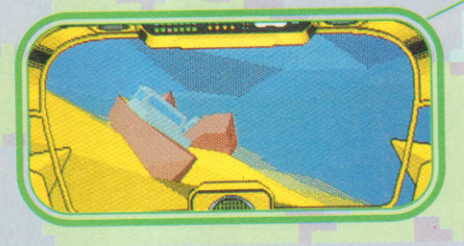


Night time sequences afford excellent cover for secret movement and actions, illuminated by the glare of your jeep's headlights.



The playing area of three million cubic miles is not restricted solely to areas above ground. You have full freedom of movement underwater, and three types of 'submarine' in which to achieve it.

Screen shots shown are taken from the Atari ST versions. Actual sceens may vary by format



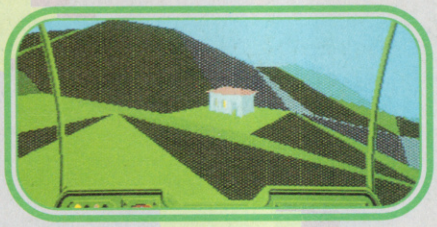
Seek out and destroy enemy shipping units, condemning them to a watery grave on the sea bed, from where the ocean's surface is clearly visible above.

TOTAL FREEDOM- FROM RA

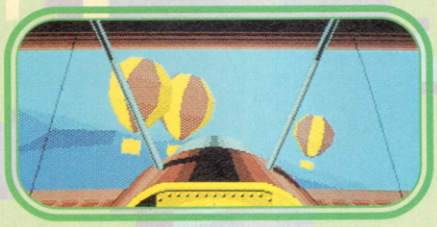
(1,000 miles long X 1,000 miles wide X 15,000 feet high.) + (4,000 characters X 22 mod

FREEDOM

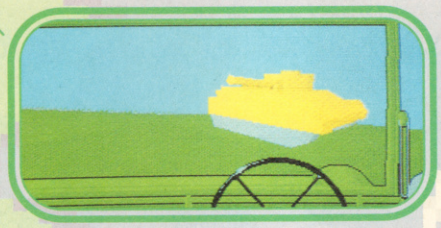
A three dimensional environment packed with action, adventure and strategy. Entering it is easy.....breaking free is what's hard !



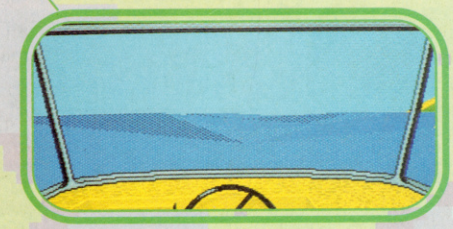
A million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by fractal techniques, and fully light sourced throughout, provides a playing arena far superior to even its predecessor, Midwinter I.



Fly the skies above the forty-one islands by helicopter, zeppelin, parachute, rocket pack, or, as seen here, biplane and balloon, all offering superb views of the land and of the other aircraft.



The enemy have a vast array for firepower aimed at you, on land, in the air, and across the sea, and react quickly and intelligently to your actions.



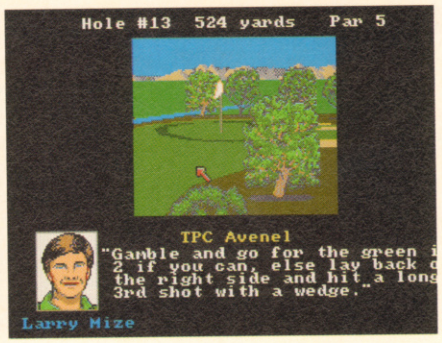
The sea surface is generated by constantly moving fractal points, causing you to bob up and down as you swim or sail across it.

Flames of Freedom will be available shortly for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC compatibles.

BIRD MASTERS OF STRATEGY

transprt X 1,000s of buildings) = 3,000,000 cubic miles of Action, Adventure and Strategy.

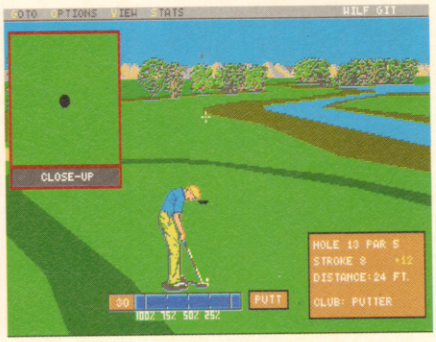
1 There are four courses to play on, three 'real life' ones plus a bonus one that they've made up too. Here's Avenel, where, according to the interesting information at the back of the instruction booklet, 'the mixed topography of the rolling Maryland countryside requires a player to take a substantial number of risks to complete the course.' In other words, it's more than a little bit tricky.



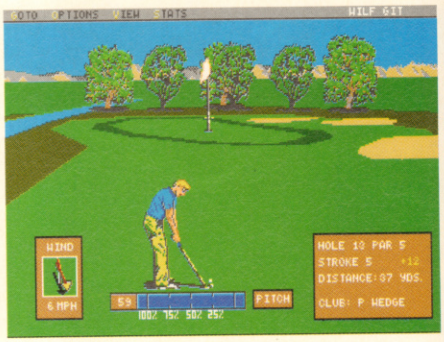
2 Before you tee off they show you this nifty 3D expanding fly-by view of the hole you're about to attempt (as if you were flying around it in a helicopter or something), complete with some invaluable advice from one of the ten professional golfers featured in the game. Here, Larry advises us to go for the green in either two or three shots. Thanks, Larry.

3 Time to tee off. You automatically face the flag on all shots, while that cursor in the middle of the screen (which you can move) shows you the direction in which the ball will be hit (leave it in the middle to aim directly towards the flag). Here the wind is blowing you over to the right, so move the cursor slightly to the left to compensate for this and hit the ball at full power.

7 Before you attempt each hole (and after each shot has been taken) this overhead view map is displayed. That line shows the route your ball has taken. Yes, yes, I know it's a better idea to actually stay on the fairway, but let's not be fussy, eh?



8 Hurrah! We're on the green and ready to putt. The putter is selected automatically (so, no, you can't try and do it with a nine iron), but you can set the distance you require the ball to travel if hit on 100%. (Otherwise the most appropriate one is selected for you).



9 A club can be made to hit further than usual by means of 'overswing' – this involves allowing your power to build up higher than what the game (rather ludicrously) refers to as '100%'. Your ball will go further if you do this, but any hook or slice will be vastly exaggerated, so you're taking quite a risk – you'll have to be pretty nifty with your button pressing

PGA TOUR GOLF

At last – a worthy successor to the *Leaderboard*

Game	**PGA Tour Golf**
Publisher	**Electronic Arts**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer	**Bluesky Software**
Release Date	**Out now**

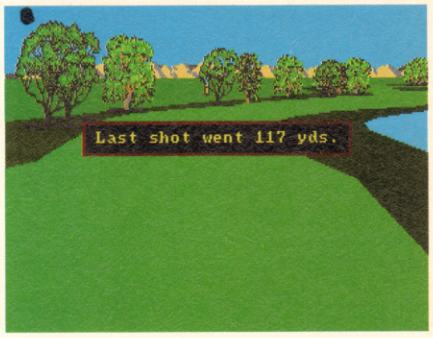
The handy thing about computer golf is that, compared to the real thing, it's relatively easy to play – sinking a hole of 584 yards in three shots is actually perfectly feasible (if admittedly pretty hard). The best thing about this is that it opens up ample opportunity to invite over some of your less knowledgeable friends and (providing you've practised a bit) fool them into thinking you're not only brilliant at the computerised version, but a complete professional at the real thing too.

A corker of an idea, I'd have thought, especially as these golfing games tend to be pretty good fun even when you're not dead set on impressing somebody. The only problem is, which one to buy?

Until now, the choice has been rather limited because (apart from the dated, if rather brilliant, *Leaderboard* series), most

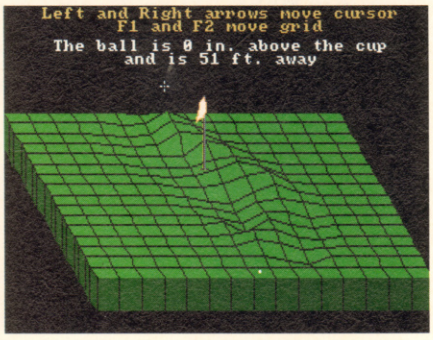
4 Ooops – sliced it a bit to the right, as this instant replay shows. Ahem.

5 And this is where we ended up. The computer kindly picks the most appropriate club to use for each shot (although you can change to another one if you prefer). Here a pitching wedge seems like the best bet to get out of the heavy rough – the 'ball lie' (what sort of land it's just landed on) is given before each shot, incidentally, which can prove useful.



6 And (phew!) the ball has landed back on the fairway so we're in play again. That's me in the distance, by the way. Hello.

10 First the good news – we're almost on the green. Now the bad – we're actually trapped in a bunker. (I think this calls for the sand wedge).

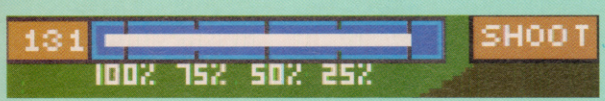


11 Naturally, the slopes and bumps of the green will affect putting considerably, so this 3D grid thing is presented every time you reach it so you can see how things lie. It's quite clever actually – you can twiddle the entire contour map around for a different perspective on things if you desire.

12 Thank you, thank you. I've potted the ball (and only one over par as well). I'll have to do better than that when I get onto the tournament though.

series. And (joy!) it isn't endorsed by some tedious old golfer either!

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH PLAY



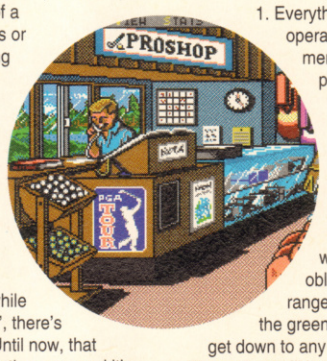
RIGHT, SO HOW D'YOU TAKE A SHOT?

Taking a shot relies on the tried and tested 'bar method.' See that number on the far left? That's approximately how far the club will hit the ball on full power (not taking into account wind and slope). Right, now click the mouse to start the bar going from right to left, then click again when it gets to the power you require – the bar will now start returning. Get ready – you want to click it exactly when it gets back to zero. Do it too early and it will hook to the left, too late and it will slice to the right.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WIND?

You will, of course, have to take into account the direction and the strength of the wind – it will carry or slow down the ball, but it will also change the direction of flight (more significantly on longer shots). That's where this little windometer comes in handy.

of them have been endorsed by some golfer or other. This means things tend to be a bit 'one sided' as far as gameplay tactics are concerned, and (worse still) they mean a picture of a grinning Jack Nicklaus or Greg Norman cropping up on screen every two seconds (which tends to put you off a bit). Add to that the fact that most golf games tend to be a little too complicated to play, and rather slow while they're about it, and you'll soon see that while they're all 'quite good', there's no clear cut winner. Until now, that is, because here's another one, and it's actually jolly good.



There are a lot of good things about *PGA Tour Golf* (we'll call it *PGA* for short), but the real beauty of it is that it's all so simple to play – so simple in fact that you could probably throw away the instruction manual and work out how to do it for yourself. Let's dive in for a closer look.

Some points about the game:

1. Everything you'll need is operated via pull down menus, or single key presses if you prefer, which makes for an incredibly user-friendly game. Starting to play is a real cinch, therefore – my advice would be to practice your driving (ie wacking balls into oblivion) on the driving range, then your putting on the green, before you actually get down to any serious competitions. (That way you'll be suitably ready to impress any chicks who happen to pass by while you're playing).

2. Once you've got the feel of the controls (which won't take a minute), you can put your driving and putting together and practice on the four courses, playing either the whole of each course, or swopping →

between courses and holes at will.

Chances are you won't be getting par for a while (in other words, you won't be completing the hole in the number of shots it would take you if you were any good), but don't worry, it'll come with effort.

3. For added excitement, a multiple player option is available, allowing you to play with up to three chums, which ups the fun of things considerably. If all your friends are, er, 'out' then you can play with some pretend ones (the computer plays them for you) – this can prove rather useful because you can watch how the computer plays the hole, then copy it and achieve a better result than you would have done beforehand.

4. As you play, various maps of the course, previews to each hole, overhead views of where you've got so far and details of where your ball has landed are given to you automatically if and when you need them – a nice touch which saves you piddling about with the menus every shot as in some golf games. You can turn any of the features off if you'd prefer, and then only have them displayed if selected.

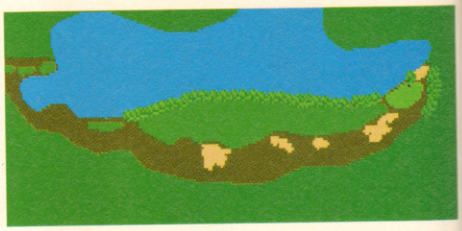
5. Slightly crap players will be pleased to hear that *PGA* allows you to take an infinite number of 'Mulligans' – in other words cheat, and replay your last shot without the one you've just taken counting.

6. Once you've got to grips with the courses, then you can enter the Tournament. Once again, up to four players can enter (either real, or taken by the computer) and game play is the same as before, though you can't change courses or holes or rely on Mulligans to see you through. You are playing against sixty other players (although you don't see them play, thank goodness – it'd take forever) who appear merely as statistics displayed on the Leaderboard after each hole.

Most of the players have already started when you and your optional friends begin (some have practically finished the course), so you start about halfway down the table and have to score a number of points below 'par' for the course to rank among the top 48, and so move on to round two (and with any luck rounds three and four after that).

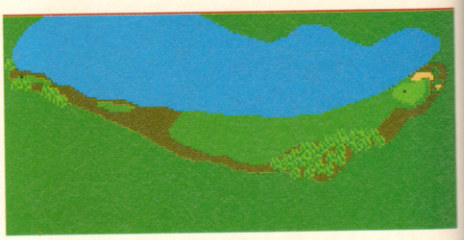
THE SHAPE OF PUTTS TO COME

Hole 11. PGA WEST. 618 yards. Par 5



Hole 16. PGA WEST. 440 yards. Par 4

Hole 16. PGA WEST. 571 yards. Par 5



Hole 18. TPC SAWGRASS. 440 yards. Par 4

Here's a sneak preview of some of the rather nastier holes you'll encounter throughout the four courses.

BEST GOLFING GAME TO DATE?

It all sounds pretty good, doesn't it? And it is. More than pretty good I'd say. It is – yes! – probably the best golfing game for the Amiga to date.

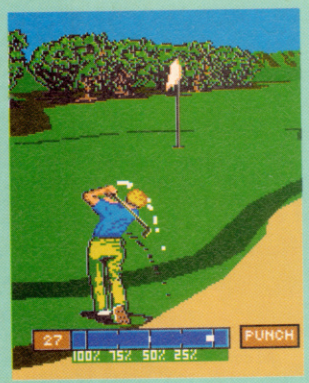
Without a doubt the best thing about it is that it's such a joy to use – everything you possibly need to know is given automatically just when needed, so you can concentrate on playing your shots and still know what's going on. Even the most unknowledgable golf person will be able to work out what to do, while the game offers enough realism to keep the experts happy. Providing you didn't really throw the instruction manual away (that was just my little joke back at the beginning, you see) you can check out loads of information on the courses, find out the way the pros would tackle certain problems in real life, and pick up hints on the best way to face any problems you might come across.

Being easy to use, and still fairly accurate, is all very well, I hear you saying, but is it actually any fun to play? Well, yes it is. *PGA* is utterly (utterly) addictive – whether you're practising 'en seul', playing a 'friendly' with some pals or completing in the tournament, it's one of those games which'll have you itching for 'just one more go' before bedtime (or whatever). The 72 different holes (4 courses x 18) would provide long term entertainment too I'd imagine, with the tournament keeping you playing and playing until you're actually good enough to win some money. In short, I'd say that if you want a golf game for your Amiga, then this is the one to buy – it really is, for want of a slightly more original word, a 'corker'.

■ *Rich Pelley*

THOSE TRICK SHOTS IN FULL

To impress your friends further (and to pretend you actually know what's going on), you can use one of the trick shots PGA offers. Here's a run down.

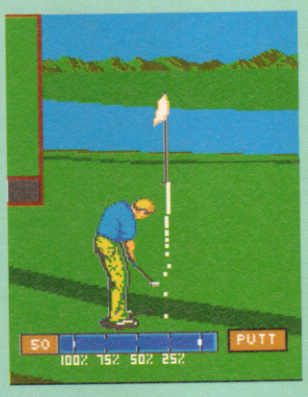


PUNCH SHOT

This one's particularly useful for getting out of the rough or a bunker. Instead of hitting the ball up, and have it perhaps zoom off in the wrong direction, you hit it low and straight – much more chance of making the hole.

CHIP SHOT

The idea of the chip shot is that when you're close to the green, or on the fringe around it, you chip the ball high into the air (but only in a weedy sort of a manner), cross your fingers and hope it goes into the hole.



FRINGE PUTT

If you're on the fringe, and decide to chip the ball rather than putt it, and then decide it would perhaps have been best to use the putter after all, simply select the Fringe Putt and Bob's your uncle.

UPPERS Simple to use, with the difficulty level pitched just right, loads of holes to play, all the features you'd ever need (even a 'cheat' option), nice graphics and (to cap it all), it's really rather addictive.

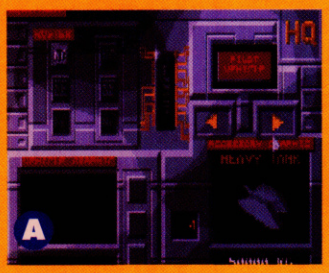
DOWNERS Er, well, it's not particularly original is it? There are no breathtaking, outstanding new features here, which is perhaps a bit of a shame.

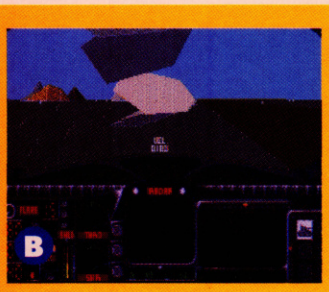
THE BOTTOM LINE

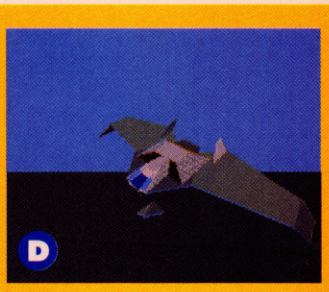
A jolly good golfing sim which is not only easy to play and true to life, butrather scrumptiously playable too.

88 PERCENT

GO WiLd!
ugly wart-nose is
a make a monkey out
me! But that's just
that witch has done -
minute I'm the mighty
and the next I'm having
kfast delousing my armpits, I can't
a step without tripping over my
uckles and, oh, there's an overhanging
- time to swing out sister! But my
ken heart is going ape. My beloved
(I can't wait to share a banana with her)
been kidnapped and somehow I've
to regain my manhood - until then
just swingin' in the rain!
arcade sensation by Fabtek Inc.
is now available
for your micro.
ocean
OCEAN SOFTWARE LTD, 6 CENTRAL
STREET, MANCHESTER M2 5NS.
TEL: 061-832 6633, FAX 061-834 0650
SPECTRUM . AMSTRAD CARTRIDGE
COMMODORE CARTRIDGE
ATARI ST . AMIGA







HOW *NOT* TO GET STARTED ON ARMOUR-GEDDON

Okay, I've just booted up the game, I've sent my little scientists off to build some more planes, I've been outside once for a quick shuftie, and now I'm about to start the mish proper. Hmm, but which vehicle should I take?

A Here's the selection screen. If I pick a tank or whatever from over on the right there and plonk it in the box on the left I can then start to arm it with weapons from a selection. We'll go into all the choices in a minute, but you can carry three at once.

So which vehicle shall we have?

B Well, we could take a tank I s'pose. The light ones are fairly fast, and can take a surprising number of hits. You can't arm them with much in the way of weapons though, and it's particularly annoying that it can't carry rockets. Lasers (which it can take) are fairly weak, and you might as well forget firing shells – you have to judge their trajectory, which takes a real expert. Nah, on second thoughts, let's not take the light tank.

The heavy tank's a better option in many ways. It has the same controls more or less (so this could be the view from inside either of them) but can be better armed, is very sturdy, and is one of the few vehicles capable of carrying parts of the Neutron bomb (should you find them). It's dead slow though, and since we're just starting out the game and doing a bit of exploring, it's not really what we need.

C The hovercraft is lots faster, has plenty of range (it's very light on fuel) and can travel over water if need be. It's pretty tricky to control properly though, and falls apart at the slightest hint of an enemy attack (as we see here). Let's leave it behind this time.

ARMOUR-GE

A bit of strategy, a good dollop of flight sim, some easy-to-use

Game	**Armour-Geddon**
Publisher	**Psygnosis**
Price	**£25.99**
Programmer(s)	**Paul Hunter & Ed Scio**
(graphics)	**Jim Bowers, Lee Carus, Gary Corbett & Chris Wylie**
Release Date	**Out now**

Let's get the obvious comparison out of the way first. *Armour-Geddon* feels a lot like *Carrier Command*. Much more than *Battle Command*, the real follow up, did in fact. Just check out the similarities – both have gigantically scaled wargames for a plot, both offer a range of vehicles and weapons to bomb about and do some damage with, both overdose on snazzy 3D polygon graphics and – yes! – both boast lashings of ultra-violence. In fact, the biggest difference between the two seems to be that *Armour-Geddon* offers rather less water and rather more of everything else – a wider selection of tanks and planes to control, prettier 1990s graphics, and (perhaps most importantly) simpler, more user friendly controls. While it might not be quite as stunningly original (in fact, you couldn't really say it was original at all) as its illustrious predecessor, it does give the impression of updating everything quite well. There. I've done the review. You can all go home now.

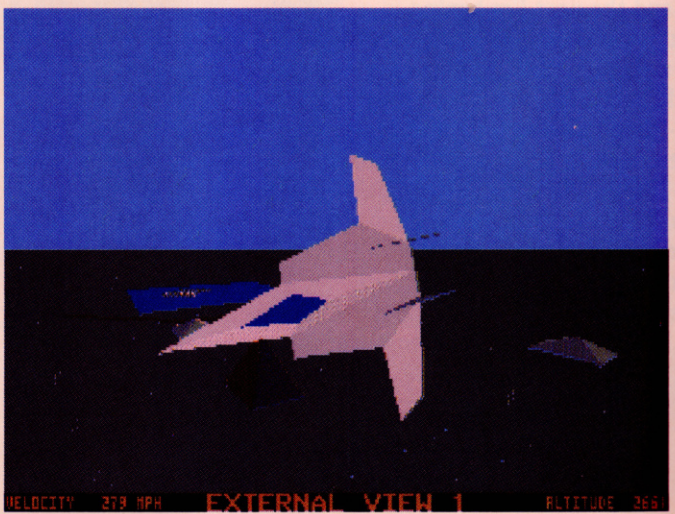
What? You want more? Oh dear. Okay, plot first, and it's a doozy. We're back in post-World War III land once again, I'm afraid, with the vast bulk of the planet devastated, and the area you happen to be living in one of the few bits to get happily by un-mutilated. (Unless you count the odd pyramid shapes of the 3D polygon mountains as mutations, that is). You play the leader of a high-tech military group hidden in a series of bunkers underground. Safe, well equipped, you've only got one problem – you're living in a state of siege. The surviving surface population of the earth blame you for the war, you see, and are out to get you using any means (which mainly involves bombing around in similar futuristic weaponry to your own) that they can.

'SUSPEND YOUR FEELINGS OF DISBELIEF AND YOU'LL FIND THAT IT ALL MAKES FOR A PRETTY ENGROSSING STORYLINE'

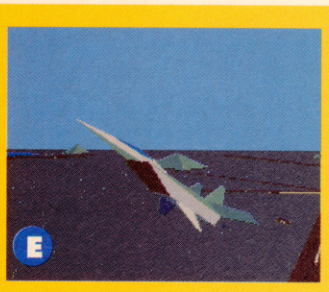
AN OFFENSIVE GAME

So, here are the points in your favour:

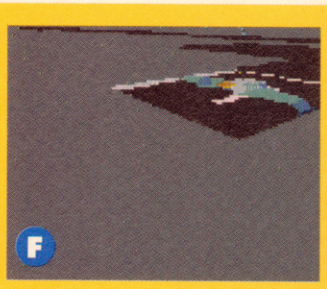
1) You've got a big bunch of scientists and engineers along with you in your bunker, complete with plenty of high tech machinery and a fair smattering of natural



The Stealth Fighter – fast, well armed, very manouvreable and forgiving to fly – for most missions, this is *the* way to travel. (And it's pretty too).

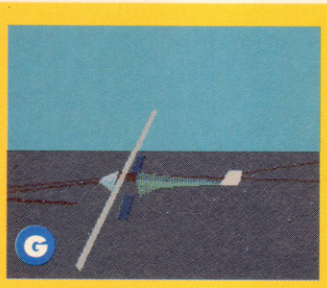


How about a helicopter? These are excellent for ground attack work (you can just hover over something and blast at it) and fairly durable. A pretty good choice, though landing safely's a bit of a problem, and since I'm not a very good pilot...

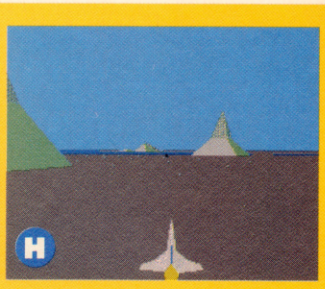


E ...a Stealth Fighter! This is more like it – fast, easy to fly, and equipped with nice guided missiles! I've trashed quite a few already though and don't want to waste any more.

F So here I am about to take off (I opted for the Chopper in the end). As you can see we come up a big lift thingie Thunderbirds-style onto the surface before take off.



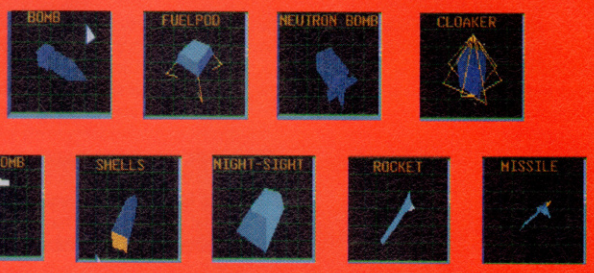
G And here I am actually in the air. This is one of a selection of external views by the way, and very nice it looks too...



H Time I took out a few baddies, I guess. (This is the missile's eye view as it locks onto a ground target somewhere over on the horizon there, by the way). Eat Sidewinder, Johnny Hun! Hee hee hee. (And so on. The only problem with all this running around shooting things stuff is that I'm liable to get shot at myself any time now, and since I'm not really a very good pilot that could cause problems. (Let's just hope my little scientists have built me a few more planes and things, eh?)

D ...the Stealth Bomber might be a better idea. It's not too slow, can carry the Neutron bomb on the final mission (that's its main use really) but it's very tricky to fly. No, a far better idea would be...

GEDDON

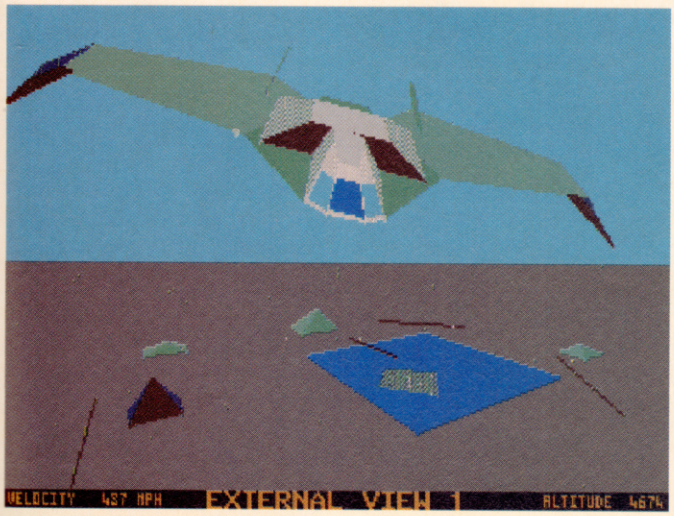


So which weapons should I take? Well, here's part of the selection. For this trip I think maybe a night sight (the game run on a time scale where a minute of real time equals an hour of game time, so darkness – a nice effect – tends to come around fairly often) and a good supply of homing missiles would be best.

controls and a fair smattering of shooting – could this be the recipe for a Carrier Command for the '90s?

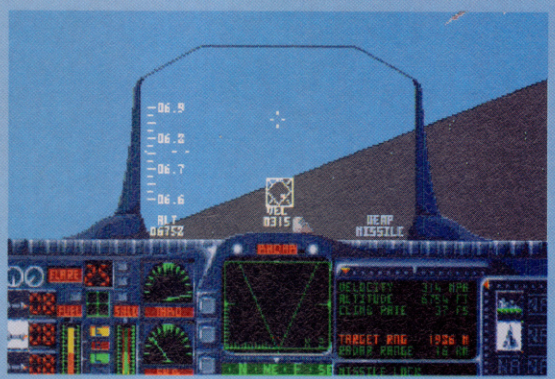
resources. They've already built you a nice little squadron of vehicles to get about in, but (at the rate at which I smashed them up, anyway) it's always worth having a few more. In fact, it's a good idea to start the game by dividing your non-fighting types into little working parties and getting them busy with their Meccano sets.

Erm, that's more or less it actually for points in your favour. Points against, however, stack up rather horribly.
1) The surface population are building a giant beam weapon which, when aimed up into the sky and bounced off an orbiting satellite, provides a ray plenty strong enough to fry you in your concrete warren.→



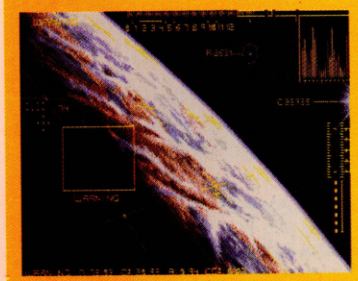
The Stealth Bomber – one of the more impressive plane's in flight (as you can see from this external view) but a real nightmare to fly. (I crashed my first three in take-off!)

FROM THE PILOT'S SEAT



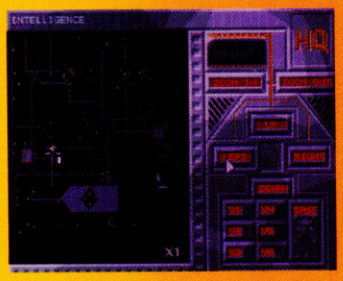
Here's what the game looks like from inside the cockpit. Despite the oodles of controls (all far too involved to get into now, though really flying isn't all that complicated once you're in the know) this isn't really a flight simulator – it's more of a flight simulation. It's not setting out to be technically accurate – though your plane can stall and so on, it can also be abused in flight a lot more readily than in most sims – and so picking up a rudimentary knowledge of how to keep airborne isn't too tricky. Landing's a bit of a bugger however, but – hey! – don't worry too much about that, you're bound to be shot down or crash a long time before any fancy ideas of returning to base occur to you.

SOME THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU PROPERLY SET OFF

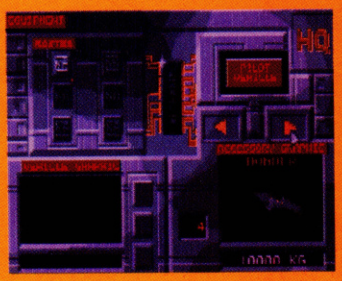


Watch the stunning intro sequence, which has to be one of Psygnosis' very best.

Check out the lie of the land with this neat revolving map jobbie.

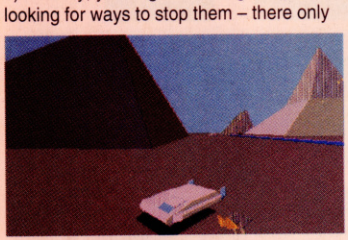


Flick to satellite view for an idea about enemy base location and the like.



Assign your little men the task of building lots of new planes (and so on).

2) They'll have finished it and be ready to fire by tea time (within a few days in the game's terms) so you'd better find a way to stop them fast!
3) Actually, you might as well give up looking for ways to stop them – there only



Your hovercraft coming under fire from an enemy floater (over on the horizon there).

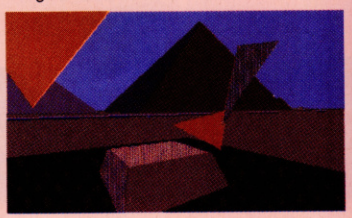
is one, and I'm about to tell you what it is. The thing is, the only weapon powerful enough to destroy the enemy cannon is the world's last remaining Neutron Bomb. Unfortunately the five parts of the bomb have been scattered about the landscape – it's your job to locate them, collect them in your various vehicles, get your scientists chappies to build them into a complete bomb, and take off on your final bombing mission in your clumbersome, difficult to control, bomber. I can't claim to have got that far myself, but it seems to me that (considering the unforgiving nature of the baddies and the near impossibility of going anywhere without coming under heavy attack) that you're going to have to be pretty bloody good to complete this game – you're going to either have to totally decimate the enemy forces so your final bombing mission goes unopposed, or you're going to have to do something very sneaky (I haven't quite worked out what yet) to get through their lines, or (at the very least) you're going to have to be really skilful at flying four of five planes at once, so you can provide a nice fighter escort for your bomber, perhaps set up some diversions and so on. In fact, thinking about it, you're probably going to have to do all three.
4) Just to re-emphasise the point again, there are an awful lot of baddies about – it'll be a lucky break if you manage to get any of your craft out of their underground Thunderbirds-like hangars and away from your base without getting attacked by at least one of them, and (in the early days at least) that'll mean the runways will be littered with prettily burning wreckage.

THE PLOT DOESN'T THICKEN

Hmm. Anything strike you as being a bit peculiar about the plot I just went through? Yes, that's right – it's utter nonsense. For example: if you've got the technology to build teleports (I haven't mentioned these yet, but they do appear in the game) what are you doing bombing about in fairly primitive contraptions like tanks and helicopters in the first place? And why on earth do the baddies have to use this super beam weapon – since they seem to more or less control the skies above you, why haven't they collected the parts of the Neutron bomb and used it on your base instead? And what on earth is a Neutron bomb doing spread out in five places across the landscape anyway? It all seems rather dubious to me.

Having said that though, suspend your feelings of disbelief and you'll find that it all makes for a pretty engrossing storyline. It'll take a while to engross you though, it has to be said – all I've really done so far is muck about with the various vehicle simulators and go on a few sorties. Actually taking a serious stab at the real mission is a bit beyond me, and is likely to remain that way for some time. This is a complicated, time consuming old thing alright, and (please correct me if I'm wrong) but I'm sure many purchasers will get nowhere near completing the thing, just like they didn't with *Carrier Command*.

So what exactly is it we've got here? Well, we've got a low degree of management stuff to start with (organising the time of your scientists and so on, as well as making sure you're liberating enough essential supplies from enemy bases to keep them going). Then we've got a level of war game-like generalship, where you've got to work out how best to use your resources, where to send your forces (as well as controlling each vehicle, you can let the individual commanders do most of the work, guiding their craft towards their directives while you keep swapping screens to keep an eye on things and take over from them when the

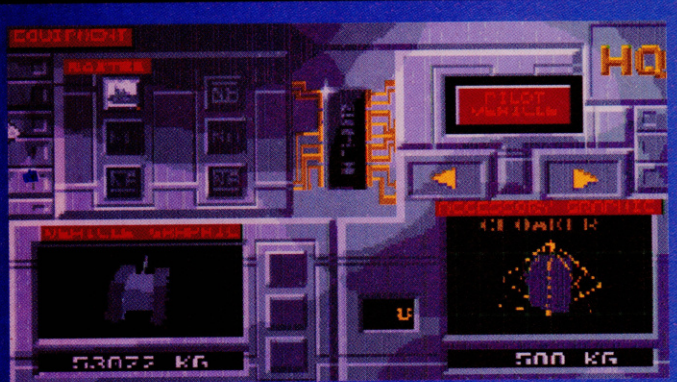


Guess what? (Actually, it's an enemy pill-box about to be hit by one of our missiles).

going gets tough) and so on.

And then, on top of it all, sits the grab-factor and most enjoyable bit – all this zooming around in lots of different buggies and blowing things up. This tends to be fast, doesn't behave massively realistically, and proves to a humungous bundle of fun – as a high-tech shoot-'em-up this game is one of the best.
In other words we've got a bit of a winner on our hands here I think, and (the phenomenal *Lemmings* aside) a strong contender for the title of Best Game Psygnosis Ever Did. If you've only got the money to buy one game this month, this has to be a serious contender.■
Matt Bielby

CLOAKING DEVICES, TELEPORTS (AND OTHER STUFF THAT CAN BE VERY USEFUL INDEED).



You see this thing here? It's a cloaking device. Instead of loading a weapon you can take this instead for a trouble-free(ish) ride. Teleports can be even more useful – take one out into the countryside somewhere, drop it, and then scuttle back home. Now you've got a handy gateway to that region of the *Armour-Geddon* map – simply park your vehicles under your floating base teleport (trickier than it sounds – subtle control at speeds under 30mph takes some learning) and you'll be able to instantly teleport yourself to the device you dropped earlier. Bingo! Saves lots of time, and can prove very useful.

UPPERS Fast, pretty 3D graphics, some fairly interesting missions and a vast range of high tech hardware to fly, drive and trash.

DOWNERS Lots of keyboard controls take some learning, and there seems to be a big gap between mucking about with it as a high tech shoot-'em up and actually getting around to taking a serious stab at the missions.

THE BOTTOM LINE

I can't see *Armour-Geddon* making anything like the impression or encouraging the level of devotion *Carrier Command* did (we've all seen a bit too much since then) but it's an excellent game in a very similar genre nonetheless.

87 PERCENT

Crystals of Arborea

A Strategic Role-Playing Challenge

Morgoth, Lord of Chaos, he who brings nothing but death, worships nothing but destruction has infected your world with his evil.

In sorrow and anger the gods drown all except the land of Arborea, home of the four sacred crystals of harmony, stolen by Morgoth and his servants.

In a race against Chaos, Prince Jarel and a band of trusted companions must find the crystals and restore them to their sacred shrines. To fail is to lose everything.

- A fascinating blend of strategy and role-playing.
- Unique large screen 3D perspective.
- Over 16000 locations to visit.
- Brain-teasing puzzles.
- Strategic fight sequences, using force of arms and magic powers.
- Independently controllable characters.
- Choose and customise your own team.
- Beautiful atmospheric graphics.

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AMIGA • ST • PC

MARKETED BY PALACE SOFTWARE

Game	**Eye Of The Beholder**
Publisher	**SSI/US Gold**
Price	**£29.99**
Programmer(s)	**SSI**
Release Date	**End of May**

Just when the *Dungeon Master* games seemed to have got the FRP market

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Before we begin, let's get one point quite clear. Yes, *Eye Of The Beholder* does look remarkably similar to *Dungeon Master* (and *Chaos Strikes Back*, its latest incarnation). But it's got a very good excuse. You see, *Eye Of The Beholder* is actually the latest in SSI's line of official Dungeons & Dragons computer games. Now, as any role-player worth his magic armour will tell you, Dungeons & Dragons games are by far and away the most popular and influential fantasy games money (or dragon's gold) can buy. In fact, almost every computer role-playing game

'WHILE NEVER LOOKING OLD FASHIONED, IT DOESN'T REALLY PUSH THE GAME STYLE FAR ENOUGH'

ever released borrows heavily on the concepts of D&D, *Dungeon Master* included (let's call it *DM* from now on to save me typing it out each time), so it's only fair that SSI should eventually borrow from *DM* in return. And now they've done it, applying a 3D maze design to their D&D licence. Yes, you'd be perfectly within your rights to cry 'Just a minute, that looks very familiar', but before you do so just remember that this is as much down to *DM* ripping off D&D as *Eye Of The Beholder* ripping off *Dungeon Master*. Follow that? No? Oh well, on with the review.

Resurrect this pour soul, and you'll have an extra character for your party. Judging by the set of lock-picks lying nearby, he used to be a thief. (Hmm, could prove useful).

What really hits you about this game (apart from the initial deja-vu) is the remarkable attention to D&D detail. A quick scan of the (very helpful indeed) manual reveals a sizeable number of features ported perfectly from the original game. This extends from the races and character classes, right through character generation and into the much more wooly territory of 'the flavour of the game as a whole'. Once you've played *Eye Of the Beholder* for a short period of time, you begin to realise one very important difference between it and *DM* – whereas *Dungeon Master* felt like a set of puzzles with a bit of mapping and killing thrown in to make it interesting, *Eye* gives a real feeling of participation. You start to believe in the city of Waterdeep, with its underground network of damp, slimy tunnels, and this adds much to the game.

Instead of posing problems at every turn, *Eye* lets you explore quite sizeable chunks of the caverns in a free sort of manner, with only battles with the undead and other assorted cave dwellers cropping up at anything like regular intervals. This gives the game a much looser feel, and in this case that's a good thing, lending it a smooth and realistic fantasy atmosphere.

IT'S THE REAL THING

A couple of days into playing, and you'll realise two important things. Firstly, just how massive the game is (making mapping essential). They may say size isn't everything, but when you are a hardy, adventuring kind of a guy, it's nice to know that it's there. The second thing you notice is just how bloody addicted you are. For crying out loud, why did they have to make →

'I'VE LOST HOURS ON THIS GAME – MORE SO THAN WITH ANYTHING I'VE PLAYED IN AGES'

WHAT'S WHAT IN EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

The main action screen – a 3D view of your surroundings (including any nearby uglies like this one) is presentated at all times.

Movement icons – they allow back-tracking and left or right slides, as well as ninety degree rotations and plain old marching forward.

A quick resumé of your party's health and the things your people are carrying. It doesn't look good – three of them are unconscious!

Your compass – a must-have for any serious adventurer.

The message box – *Eye*'s only real concession to text adventuring.

Selecting 'Camp' allows your party to rest, heal themselves, and re-learn spells. The game can also be saved or loaded from here (though you can't do any of this when there are monsters about!)

He may look mean, but in actual fact he's only a crummy little Kobald. Don't worry – they aren't any threat unless there's a whole pack of them.

Level Four is guaranteed to give you the creeps. The whole thing is packed with giant (and highly poisonous) spiders. (Time for a little magic, I'd say).

DESPITE APPEARANCES, D&D GAMES AREN'T ALL THE SAME...

Way back in 1987, TSR (the Dungeons & Dragons people) decided that the time was right to grant a licence for the D&D games system to be transferred to computer. Effectively auctioning the rights to their name, software companies were invited to demonstrate what they could achieve with the system before any decisions were made. Having already established a reputation as one of the USA's leading strategy, wargame and role-playing companies, SSI was able to snap it up quite happily, paving the way for what has become a whole range of D&D-related software.

From fairly inauspicious beginnings (it has to be said, their first efforts weren't really very good), they've continually experimented with game formats, each time looking at the D&D system from a new angle. The last two releases, *Pools Of Radiance* and *DragonStrike*, refined the style to the point where it really started to work. The former used an *Ultima*-style gaming system, while the latter broke from the mould entirely, offering a 3D vector combat game.

Having said that though, it's only with *Eye Of The Beholder* that SSI really seem to have hit the nail on the head. Excellent though this game is, it's the avenues it opens up for the rest of the series that make it really exciting. SSI now have a wide range of different game engines to switch between, and you can see how keen they are to experiment by checking out the titles scheduled for this year. There's *Pools Of Darkness*, for instance, the final chapter in the *Pools* saga, while the *Pools* game engine also makes an appearance on another D&D tale entitled *Gateway To The Savage Frontier*, which opens up another storyline entirely. Later games in the *Gateway* series are unlikely to use the same game system, however. Two possibilities are to a) to use the *Dungeon Master*-influenced set-up employed in *Eye Of The Beholder* (which would be something to look forward to, particularly if they manage to refine the style yet further) or b) to take the same approach as their other new D&D game..

SSI's forthcoming *Shadow Sorcerer* - a new direction for Dungeons & Dragons games.

Which is what? Well, it's called *Shadow Sorcerer*, and it promises several innovations, not least that there will be up to eleven characters interacting on the screen at any one time! Set in the DragonLance D&D world, *Shadow Sorcerer* looks more arcadey than most, with 3D isometric graphics and lots of real-time combat.

Finally (for the moment), there's another 3D isometric effort (one of our favourite ways of presenting an adventure game) being developed in Europe for the company. Details are rather vague at the moment – other than telling us that it will probably be set in the Forgotten Realms world (the one depicted in the *Pools* saga and *Eye Of The Beholder*), SSI are keeping it all a bit hush-hush.

While to the non-D&D fan it no doubt looks as if SSI are in the business of churning out hundreds of near-identical products on a production-line basis, variety actually seems to be the name of the game, with new ideas and game engines being experimented with constantly. This can only be welcomed as a Good Thing – just take a look at the now hopelessly outmoded *Bard's Tale* series to see what happens when you give up trying.

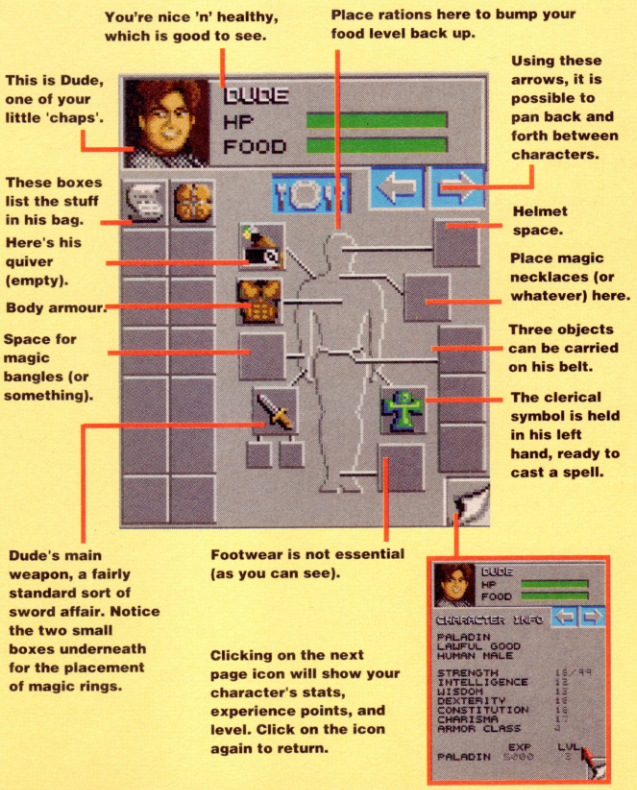
cornered, SSI make a comeback and take the genre into the '90s.

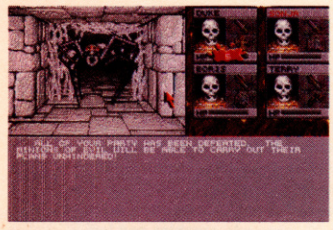
Level 2 here we come (the entrance is down that ladder there). Being the domain of The Undead, it's packed with skeletons and zombies - good job we've got a cleric (or holy man) with us really, isn't it? He can have great fun down there warding them off.

Ughh! The first level of the Waterdeep dungeons is crawling (or slithering – whatever the word is) with giant leeches. Watch out! They'll rear up and try to bite you! (Yes, you're right – D&D leeches don't behave quite the same as 'normal' ones!)

WHAT'S IN HIS POCKETS?

Eye Of The Beholder uses an object management system very close to the one in *Dungeon Master*. Things have been refined even further however, making just about everything pretty easy to get your mind around from the word go.





The giant, poisonous spiders of Level Four are back, and – oh no! – they seem to have made pretty short work of our party!

it so compulsive? I've lost hours on this game – more so than with anything I've played in ages. Whereas in *DM* my characters simply felt like cyphers to be manipulated as I saw fit, the ones created in *Eye* really grew on me (must be something to do with male bonding). The addition of NPCs (that's computer-controlled non-player characters) joining and leaving the party heightens the realistic effect yet further.

This dedication it engenders reaps you rewards too, for after much clashing of swords and casting of spells, your little guys gain enough experience to move up a level in their chosen profession. This means greater strength and better spells, and, believe me, you'll need them too in the later levels, where (as the traps and tests get deadlier) things get very involving and – yes – frightening indeed. I can't think of a delicate way to put this but, well, some of the monsters really scared the crap out of me.

THE LOOKING GLASS

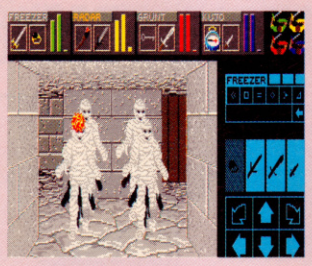
And there we have it really. *Eye Of The Beholder* may look a lot like *Dungeon Master*, it may nick quite a few ideas from it (especially the character inventory screens and way the user interface works), but I find it quite easy to forgive. There's a simple reason why too – in all respects it improves things, adding a truer D&D flavour to the proceedings. It's just a shame all these features weren't included in the 'real' *Dungeon Master* in the first place – I can't think of any real reason why they couldn't have been.

No, the only problem I can really see with *Eye Of The Beholder* is that, while never looking old fashioned, it doesn't really push the game style far enough. It's 1991 now, and there are a number of things which could (and should) have been given a bit more spit and polish. Smooth animation when walking through the dungeons would have been nice, for instance, as would some degree of character interaction (even if it was only on the same level of complexity as in the *Ultima* games). And just for once I'd like to see a monster with a little bit of intelligence crop up, perhaps one that you *don't* have to kill on sight. (And it can be done, most notably in an old, pre-*DM* Spectrum game called *Swords & Sorcery* – a flawed masterpiece if ever there was one). Still, these are minor gripes, and don't really affect the enjoyability of the game as a whole too much. (But programmers please note – if you intend doing another role-playing game, you'll have to get your fingers out!)

It's hard to define exactly why I like this game so much. I know it can be argued that it's already been done five years ago. I know that the only reason it looks so state-of-the-art is that most role-playing games are so dodgy anyway. I know all that, and it doesn't stop this being just so classy, so involving, and so satisfying. The use of real Dungeons & Dragons rules and elements really elevates it to a new level. I just can't help being in love with it. So there.■

Mark Ramshaw

Simply press the button on the wall and – open sesame! – you can go through. (I don't know if you'd want to though).



***Chaos Strikes Back* (otherwise known as *Dungeon Master* Part 2)**

***Eye Of The Beholder* – the latest in a long line of D&D epics.**

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER VS DUNGEON MASTER (1&2)

And here we have them – the two most important dungeon-based role-playing epics in the world today. Putting personal prejudices aside, which comes out tops? Here's a blow-by-blow comparison:

Round One - Graphics
Visually, *Eye Of The Beholder* wins hands down. The dungeons are more atmospheric, the icons prettier, and the monsters are actually quite well animated. *Dungeon Master* does have the added attraction of clever lighting effects (ie things get progressively darker as torches run out), but that can actually work out more irritating than anything else.
***Eye* 8 *DM* 6**

Round Two - Atmosphere
***Eye Of The Beholder* wins again, I'm afraid. Atmosphere can make or break a fantasy game, and decent sound is one of the most effective ways to help create it. *Eye Of The Beholder* manages to grab you with the volume turned right down, so imagine how engrossing it is with sampled screams and so on. (Oh dear, *Dungeon Master* seems to be lagging somewhat behind).**
***Eye* 9 *DM* 7**

Round Three - Design
Just which game has the best dungeon design is more of a subjective thing. *Dungeon Master* concentrates on pushing a lot of puzzles at you, making progress harder. *Eye*, on the other hand, offers a more spacious affair, giving the player plenty of room to roam around, hacking up the odd monster and so on.
***Eye* 7 *DM* 7**

And the winner is..?

***Eye* 24 *DM* 20**
And so there we have it. *Dungeon Master* quite clearly suffers due to its age, comparative lack of atmosphere, and sacrifice of some fantasy elements in favour of more puzzles. Thus *Eye Of The Beholder* quite convincingly takes the role-playing crown from the previous champion – but for how long?

LET'S ADD A LITTLE CHARACTER, SHALL WE?

Generating your party of characters in *Eye Of The Beholder* follows the original D&D character creation rules remarkably well. First, a character race is selected, followed by a profession. The actual professions available to you depend on the race – elves, for example, are particularly adept at multiple professions, such as fighter/cleric or fighter/thief/mage. (For the uninitiated, clerics are holy men who possess the ability to ward off undead creatures, cure wounds, and so on, while Mages are basically wizard types, who can cast some great spells, but in scraps usually turn out to be as soft as muck.).

It's always handy to choose a good spread of professions when constructing your party. This gives you a thief to unlock doors, a cleric to heal the group, a magic user who can become very powerful later in the game, and a fighter to beat hell out of the monsters.

Once the race and profession have been chosen, *Eye Of The Beholder* allows you to choose the gender, and then a face for your character. A nice touch, as choosing a female character gives you a whole new set of faces to chose from. Finally it's time to roll your adventurer's stats (numbers representing excellence in various fields). Your race affects how these fall, and remember – certain professions need to be good at certain things.

Here we are on a character selection screen. The cameos on the left show the current members of the team, while on the right a new character is just about completed. He's an Elf, so I think I'll call him...National! (Oh dear).

UPPERS At last – a role-player which makes decent use of the Amiga's graphics and sound (dig those sampled screams!), and comes with an intuitive control system to boot. And it's so huge! Truly a game to play for months (and months) to come – there's still life in this old dog yet.

DOWNERS A major factor explaining why this looks so good is that so little has been done post-*Dungeon Master* to really push forward the fantasy role-playing concept. (We want arcade-style 3D with full character interaction, and we want it now!) There is a price to pay for such an expansive game, too – yes, it's 1 meg only time, I'm afraid.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Not really as big a leap on from *Dungeon Master* as I would like, but still sufficiently different to make it an essential purchase. Intelligent and (yes, it's that word again) atmospheric, it's a wonderful piece of software and no mistake.

88 PERCENT

Are you ready to take on Kiki and her friends in this unique game of strategy and skill?

Match up the 2 patterns of stones on the screen - special combinations give bonuses and secret levels. Succeed within the time limit and gorgeous girls will lead you to the next tantalising level.

If Kiki isn't temptation enough, then 400 levels of stunning graphics, sound and speech, and gameplay so addictive that you will have to be dragged screaming from the screen, surely is.

Available on Amiga (24-99), Atari ST (24-99), PC (24-99), and C64 (10-99 cass., 14-99) disk).

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Game	**The Killing Cloud**
Publisher	**Image Works**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Vektor Grafix**
Release Date	**Out now**

THE KILLING CLOUD

The classic that, erm, wasn't. The *Killing Cloud*

Blimey! The inhabitants of the once great (and not at all weird or freaksome) city of San Francisco had better not even bother getting out of bed tomorrow morning. Why's this? Well, according to the scenario for *The Killing Cloud*, good old SF will be slimed by a toxic fog before New Year's Day 1997.

The reason for the arrival of the fog, or, as it is more affectionately known, the 'Killing Cloud,' is swathed in myth, legend,

'IF THERE WASN'T SUCH A GENRE AS THE 'SHOOT-CHASE-CATCH-TALK-'EM-UP' BEFORE, THERE IS NOW.'

Green politics and poisonous rumour. It may well have been caused by the vile, crusty, rotten way in which we treat the planet, or person or persons unknown may have whipped it up to start a major crime wave and get rid of all the Californian hippies. Who knows?

Actually, apart from getting in the way and making life difficult, the cloud plays little part in what you have to do during the game. In fact the whole thing should really have been called something like *The Dirty Low Down Black Angels Get Tough and, erm, There's This Toxic Stuff Too*, but the name would have been far too long to fit on the packaging.

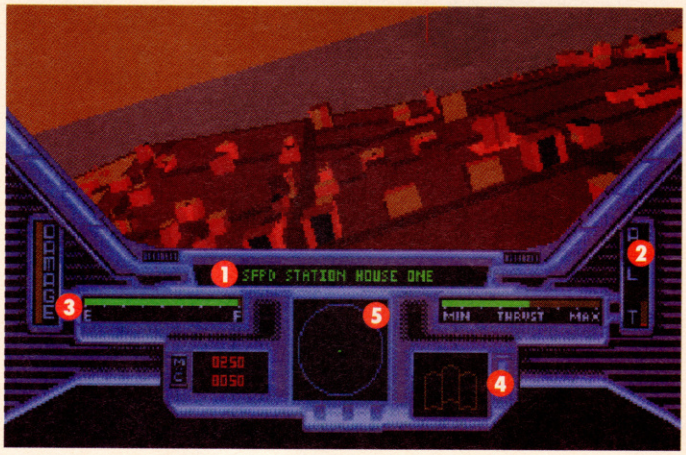
A FIVE COURSE MEAL

The Killing Cloud has this habit of not actually doing what you think it's going to do. Visually, it's a delicious five course meal with coffee. All 3D filled vector graphics offering dizzying flying sequences, altitude perspectives, and a real feeling of danger in the majority of the ten scenarios. However, and that's 'However' with a capital H, it is also riddled with some frustrating inconsistencies.

Try this one out for a starter. Your main task in life, as a hi-tech San Francisco cop, is to catch members of the Black Angels gang. You are not allowed to kill the beggars unless they shoot first – in fact you have to catch them in order to interrogate them. That, as any torturer worth his or her salt will tell you, means getting them alive. (To digress for a moment, there was in fact a torture scene included in the game until Amnesty International objected, and it was cut. End of digression.) You achieve the capture by way of nets - for a fuller explanation see the box over there on the right.

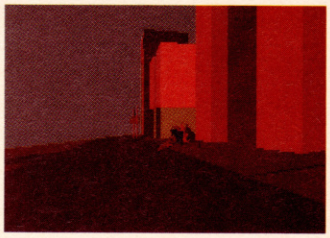
Now, instead of carrying these nets with you in your XB500 hoverbike, you have to leave them scattered about the city, and here's the rub – you have to do the scattering before going on the mission. Why? Why oh why, if you're so damned technologically advanced, do you have to do this? Why isn't there a tiny area of the bike in which to store the net? (For instance). It's stupid. Maybe a few more scenarios and no net collecting would have added to the buzz of what is potentially a superb game.

Still, one positive side about the nets, or Nets as they are known to the SFPD, is that you can use them as landmarks via your on-board radar. You have to do this because some stupid →

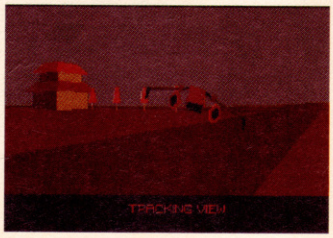


An atmospheric flying-over-the-city sequence – but what on earth are all those controls? Well...

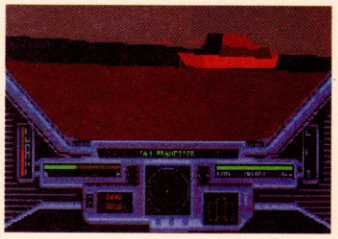
1. **Here's where your computer displays messages to you, like, erm, where you're going, for instance.**
2. **Your Cloud Altimeter – shows how far you are above it, how deep it is (and so on).**
3. **The fuel guage – important, as it is *incredibly* easy to run out.**
4. **How many Nets you're carrying.**
5. **Radar (bad guys are shown in red).**



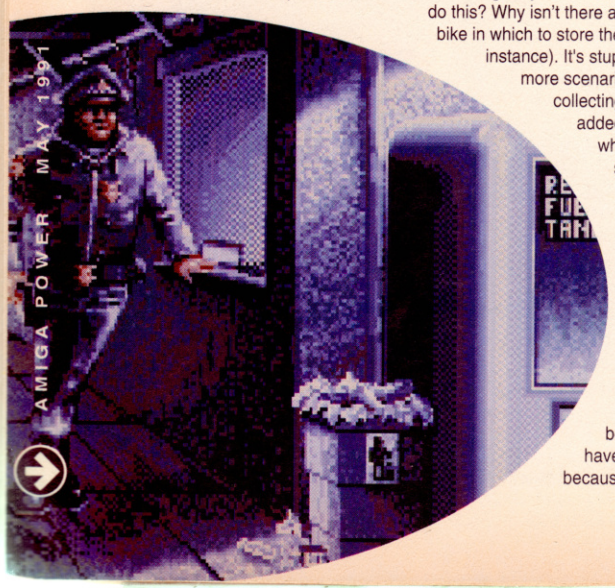
Swinging in close to an impressively large building, out in the middle of nowhere.

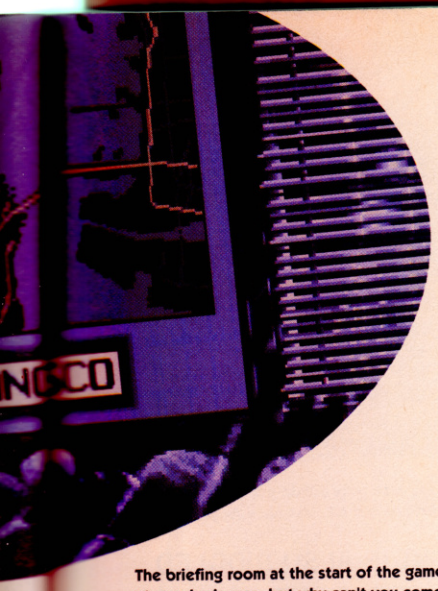


The tracking view from the back of your plane/bike thingie – neat, eh?



Erm, it's a tank. (And up to no good, I'll be bound). Shoo! Go on, shoo!





The briefing room at the start of the game – atmospheric, yes, but why can't you come back to it *after* the weapons room?

NET PROFITS

Your Hover Bike – no, it doesn't look much like a bike (more like a plane) and yes, it does look big enough to carry a few little nets!

Even though you're oozing hardness (which hides compassion and a love of flying because it unites you with your inner spirit) your major weapons in the fight against the Black Angels are Nets and PUPs. Net stands for 'net', while PUP looks like it should be an acronym, but is actually named after those small dewy-eyed creatures which follow you around. Pups are in fact mobile holding pens which are planted throughout the city.

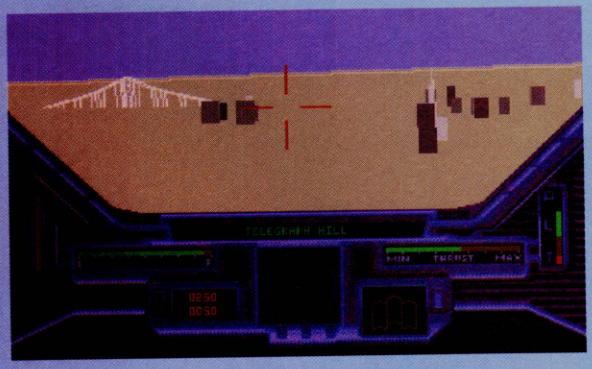
The idea is that, during the briefing period for each of the ten missions, you check out the lie of the land, and (rather illogically) you *then* plant the nets and PUPs around the place. That's right, instead of bringing them with you, you plant them from the briefing room. Remember to make sure that the PUPs are planted near to the nets, though. Why? Because they don't have a wide range. Your first task after launch is not to get to the criminals with your limited fuel; nope, you have to re-locate the nets.

Once you've done this, you pick the net up in the form of a missile which you then arm. Next, find the foe, drop the net, land and walk through the 'Killing Cloud' in order to read him his rights, then re-call the PUP. Bureaucracy? We love it.

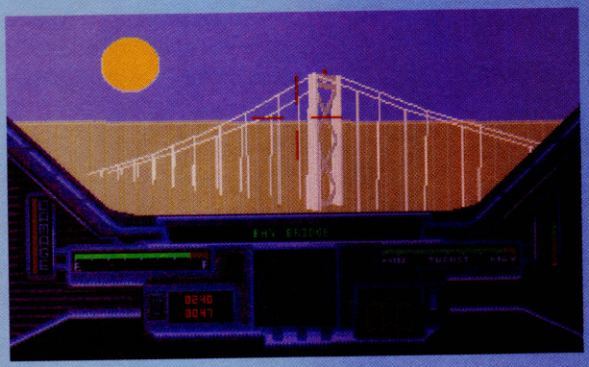
Three points to bear in mind here: Firstly, yes, there's a lot of pointless running around. Second, don't be fooled into thinking that the ten PUPs and nets you have at the start of the game are replenishable - they're not. You have a set for each mission. (In fact, when I tried to lay more than four in one go, the Amiga simply locked up). Third, the Black Angels will steal these unreplenishable tools if they can. Don't get frustrated, just kill the little scamps.■

THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

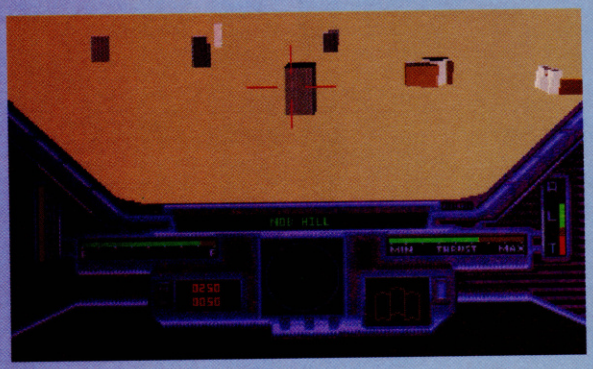
OR RATHER, THE AIR ABOVE IT – HERE'S WHERE THE GAME *REALLY* COMES ALIVE...



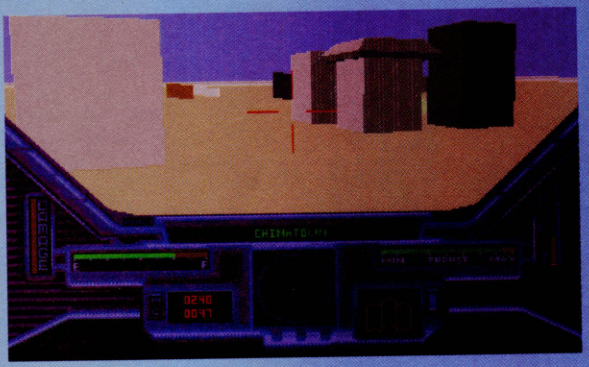
Right, here we are, flying around San Francisco in our 'hover bike' (ie plane). There seems to be some sort of bridge ahead – it could be the Golden Gate, but I rather doubt it (that's red), unless they've repainted by 1997 of course...



I know, let's fly a little closer and check it out. Ah, look, the computer's sussed it – this is the Bay Bridge apparently, and not the Golden Gate at all. Let's see if we can fly under it, shall we?

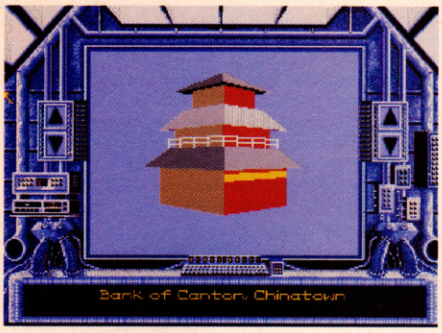


Right, here we are a bit further on, heading for somewhere called 'Nob Hill'. You might be wondering what all that pinky stuff is – it's the 'Killing Cloud', of course, which hangs around the place at just over floor level.

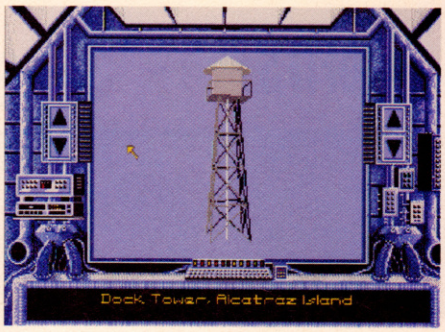


Whee! Let's make a low-level run through Chinatown. (By the way, only a cynic would suggest they put all this cloud stuff in so that they didn't have to bother drawing all the ground detail in filled 3D!)

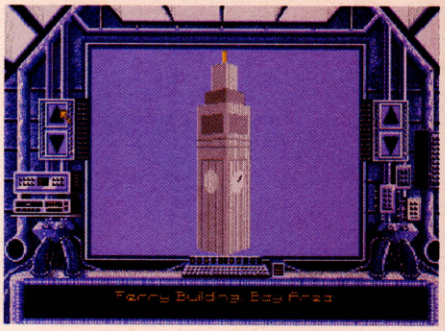
had the potential to be the best game in the mag – it's still technically superb, but lazy thinking screws the gameplay a treat.



Erm, to be honest, none of us have ever been to San Francisco, so we can't swear to the accuracy of all this...



...but it would seem as if Vektor Grafix have managed to slip an awful lot of real San Fran landmarks into the game.



Check out this Bay Area Ferry Building screen for instance, though the Chinatown and Alcatraz ones are just as good.

hoverbike designer forgot to provide an on-board map. If you don't know your North Beach from your Nob Hill, and find yourself flying around the city with

'WHINGING ASIDE, THERE ARE THRILLS TO BE HAD'

diminishing fuel (in the vague hope that you might be headed in the right direction), they might actually turn out to be your only chance to get home!

Whinging aside, there are thrills to be had, and even a little brain athletics to indulge in, before you finish *The Killing Cloud*. It is far from being a plain shoot-'em-up. In fact it's rather difficult to categorise. On the one hand you have some wonderfully animated chase and fight scenes – rapid seat-of-your pants flying with little time to think and massive calls on your skill as a pilot. On the other hand, there is strategy, nerve-end jangling tension, and a neat interrogation-cum-plea bargaining scene. If there wasn't such a genre as the 'Shoot-Chase-Catch-Talk-'em-Up' before, there is now.

A COMPUTERISED B-MOVIE

While playing it I kept finding myself wishing someone had made a film out of it first. If only some decent script writers had got hold of the plot and said: 'See here guys, this just doesn't make sense. Why can't you do so-and-so? What possible reason can you have for such and such?'

An example: once you've been in the briefing room and placed your nets you go into the armoury to chose your weapons. Perhaps some explosive tipped MG ammo and some armour piercing shells would be a good idea? Or maybe you'd be better off taking a GEP MkIV armour suit? Hang on, let's go back through the door to the briefing room to check that out the mission again before we decide. What? We can't? No, all we can do is to launch off on our hoverbike into the mission proper, quite possibly sure in the knowledge that we've cocked it all up from the outset by not having put the nets in the right places, by having taken the wrong equipment with you and so on. There's no possible internal game logic for it to deny you the right to prepare yourself properly before you set off. How very unnecessary, and how very, very annoying.

'IT IS ALSO RIDDLED WITH SOME FRUSTRATING INCONSISTENCIES'

A BOX-OFFICE FLOP?

The Killing Cloud really is like one of those movies which has superb special effects, excellent ideas, great sequences and a half-blind mule of a plot. It's like Batteries Not Included or The Black Hole, or hundreds of others we could both probably mention. A good script writer would have knocked some sense into it for sure, but a better special effects set-up would be hard to find.

But there I go, griping again. In many ways it feels rather churlish of me to complain too much – after all, it's all too apparent that the plot writer(s) did intend to create a solid, believable and atmospheric world in which to play out your role. The action is fast and furious. The feel of the whole venture smacks of quality and thought. It's just a shame that the occasional illogicality lets it down.■ *Tim Smith*

UPPERS Graphically it makes you sit back and say 'My, that's jolly good'. Or it would if you had time. The ten scenarios certainly allow you to hone your skills. It's not all brawn, there's brains too.

DOWNERS Illogic in the form of detailed plot just does not hack it. The interrogation scenes are a little on the 'Did', 'Didn't' side; a better parser would have given it real style. You are not informed about the fact that you only have ten PUPs and nets to last you throughout the game.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Potentially classic though the illogicality lets it down. The characters and scenarios can be built on though – watch out for *The Killing Cloud 2!*

65 PERCENT

TORTURE CONTROVERSY, THE LAYOUT OF SAN FRANCISCO, AND OTHER BURNING ISSUES.

Andy Craven is the the boss at Vektor Grafix, and while he didn't personally do a great deal of the actual work on *The Killing Cloud*, he did oversee the whole thing. Who better, then, to ask a handful of questions about it?

What do you think about the controversy over the torture scene that was cut out of the finished game?

To be honest, I think it's a lot of fuss over nothing. I didn't think it was over the top at all, but in the end it wasn't my decision and it was taken out. I think it's a bit of a shame.

Other than that, are you happy with the way the game turned out?

Yes, I'm very happy with it. It's got loads of atmosphere and there's tons of stuff in there that you don't discover even right up until the final level. We're very proud of the AI routines for the baddies too. They can actually 'see' buildings and obstacles (and you!) and they'll try to avoid them, using realistic techniques. The feel of San Francisco is really good too.

Ah yes, San Francisco. How true to life is the city map?

It's fairly close actually. The shoreline is extremely accurate and we've included most of the major landmarks. There are actually something like 2400 real ground objects featured. A little undocumented tip is that if you press the '6' key during the first level, the fog actually clears and you can see for miles.

Where did the storyline come from?

Well, the story was written in-house. We also did a special A4 comic that Mirrorsoft are distributing as a point-of-sale thing, which is partly do to with the game and partly an advert for Vektor Grafix. We have a guy on our books who used to work for Marvel, so we were able to do the whole thing ourselves.

Are there any plans for *Killing Cloud 2*?

Obviously, it depends on how successful this one is. If we were going to follow it up it would be nice to extend the gameplay and missions a bit, and improve the look of the fog and suchlike. We only used a very small fraction of the scenario we wrote in the game, so we've got lots of scope for sequels, but when we wrote it with other things in mind.

Like what?

Well, through Activision we've got links with the movie industry, and we'd like to see what we could come up with in that direction. It would certainly make a change from the way these things usually go, but again we're just waiting to see what happens.■ *Stuart Campbell*

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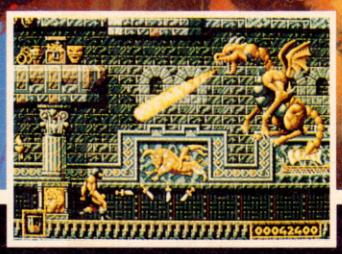
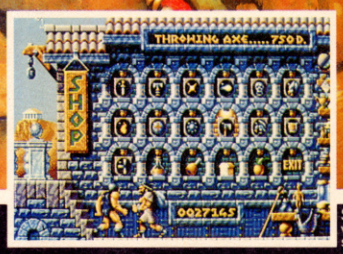
G O D S

THE BITMAP BROTHERS





ST version shown

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Amiga, ST, PC

The BITMAP BROTHERS

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COMPLETE CONTROL

Welcome to Complete Control, the biggest, best, most definitive and most, well, *complete* 16-bit tips section you'll ever see. In this first issue our very own Stuart Campbell brings you tips and cheats for every single game in our All-Time Top 100, while Gary Penn provides a *Rainbow Islands* guide so huge we've had to split it into two parts (we'll run the rest of it next month). This has to be one of the biggest, most comprehensive features on a single game ever run in a British magazine – let us know if you want to see much more of this sort of thing.

In the meantime though, remember – it's *your* tips that count as much as anybody's, so get them winging their way through the post to us now! There'll be prizes for all we use. Send to: Complete Control, Amiga Power, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. (We'll be waiting).■

ALL-TIME top GAMES

1. RAINBOW ISLANDS

See Gary's Big *Rainbow Islands* Guide in the coming pages for everything you could ever want to know about *Rainbow Islands*, as well as lots of stuff that it hadn't even entered your mind to wonder about.

2. LEMMINGS

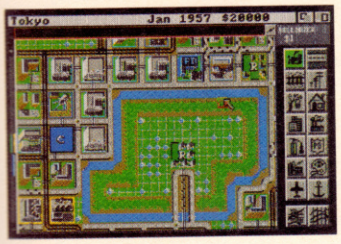
Save blockers from certain death by digging the ground out from under them, thereby turning them into walkers.
Some codes for later levels are;
FUN - OKHMDLCKCJ - level 10
HLFLCONEDY - level 20
TRICKY - CONONLIIEJ - level 10
OMICGKONEV - level 15
IJJLFOCCFT - level 20
MCENLLFHFY - level 25
HMGMCOOMFW - level 30

3. SPEEDBALL 2

Forget about spending cash on your team's attributes, just save up and buy star players instead.

4. SIM CITY

Press Caps Lock and type 'FUND' for a $10,000 bonus.



5. VIRUS

Pause and unpause the game while holding down Enter. Now press 'C' to toggle special effects, 'L' for a free missile, 'F' for fuel, 'D' for a demo, and 'N' to toggle cheat mode.

6. POPULOUS

Try these selected codes to later worlds, drawn completely at random from the depths of our own Encyclopaedia Of Completely Stupid Words Used By Programmers And No-one Else Ever.
TIMMEHOLE
HURTUSLOG
VERYQUEER
SWATHOLE
SADDILOW
SWAKOPPAL

7. KICK OFF 2

Run your fingers along the function keys while playing and S12 or S14 should appear in the corner of the screen. You will now be able to substitute one of your players for the opposition goalie. You can do this twice, by which time the chances are the replacement keeper will be rather on the crap side.

8. FALCON

Hold down 'X', 'CTRL' and Shift for in-flight re-arming.

9. INDIANAPOLIS 500

Always put 10 gallons of fuel in for qualifying, and always have the turbocharger set to maximum. You can turn it down to save fuel when you're well ahead, but don't risk it any earlier.

10. STUNT CAR RACER

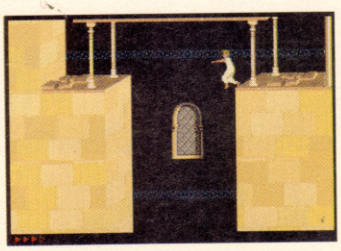
If you get stuck in a hole or at the bottom of a jump, drive slowly up to the wall and accelerate with boost. This will minimise your damage.

11. PANG

On the map screen, type 'WHAT A NICE CHEAT'. The map should turn purple, enabling you to select any level to start on (you'll have to be quick, though).

12. PRINCE OF PERSIA

Say goodbye to stuck-on-a-level misery by pressing Caps Lock and 'L' to skip rounds. (This only seems to work up to level 4)



13. SPINDIZZY WORLDS

For more precise control, put your computer on the floor and hit the space bar with your foot to brake (it's a good idea to take your shoes off first).

14. NEBULUS

Type 'HELLOIAMJMP' on the title scren, then use F1 to F8 to select any starting tower. (With infinite lives).

15. CARRIER COMMAND

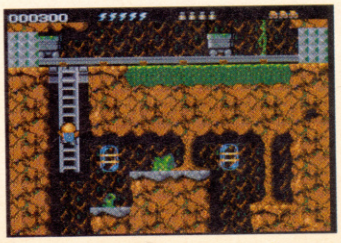
Pause the game and type 'GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME'. Now you can toggle immunity with '+' and '-'.

16. DUNGEON MASTER

For weapon-free dispatching of monsters, simply go through a door and stand on the other side. When they try to come through after you, repeatedly close the door on their heads. Ha!

17. RICK DANGEROUS II

Enter 'POOKY' on the high score table. Now on the level select menu you will be able to choose between full-length or shortened versions of the game.

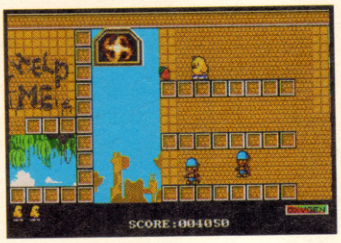


18. ULTIMA V

Search the Crypts carefully to find some magic wands. Also, save all of your characters twice in case of mishaps.

19. THE NEW ZEALAND STORY

On the title screen type 'DRATSABIWIKNEKCUFREHTOM' (that's in reverse order, censorship fans) for infinite lives, and level-skipping via the 'HELP' key. If this doesn't work, try Del, then 'M', then 'FLUFFY KIWIS' for the same effect.



20. THE SENTINEL

Borrow a close friend's brain, you're going to need a spare one...

21. DAMOCLES

On Midas reference 577-341 you can find a pyramid which contains a magic crystal. To use it, you'll need the book from the trader at Eris Capital City (13-15). Reading the book while in possession of the crystal will allow one wish to be granted. You may like to try some of the following wishes. (And then again you may not, but quite frankly I don't give a hoot either way.)
I WISH I HAD A CHEESE SANDWICH
I WISH I HAD MORE TIME
I WISH I COULD RECEIVE 1,000,000 CREDITS
I WISH THE UNIVERSE WAS MORE COLOURFUL
I WISH I KNOW HOW TO USE THE AUTHOR'S COMPUTER
I WISH I HAD MERCENARY 3 NOW

22. PARADROID 90

Don't go around shooting everything, transference is best. Even if you grapple against a lower-powered droid, consider switching to it to save your batteries.

23. PLOTTING

You're never in much danger of running out of time, so study the screen closely before you make any moves, even when everything looks clear. Watch out particularly for the ceiling formations, some of them are very sneaky indeed.

24. TYPHOON THOMPSON

On the later levels, shoot lots of islands at a time. Blast the baddies and there'll be so many sprites in the water you won't be able to fail to pick up a load.

25. LASER SQUAD

On the tougher levels, forget about buying armour. It won't do you much good and the cash is better spent on good weaponry. When shooting at things, always use Auto fire.

26. KLAX

Simply press '4' during the game to go straight to the final wave.

Over the page we've got a giant *Rainbow Islands* guide. For the rest of the 100...

TURN TO PAGE 61

TAKE CONTROL OF RAINBOW ISLANDS

To kick off our tips section, what could be better than the biggest damn guide to the ins and outs of a game you've ever seen – and what game would make a better subject than our All-Time Fave-rave, *Rainbow Islands*? Welcome, then, to Part One (the rest comes next issue). Your guide, Mr Gary Penn...

Rainbow Islands is packed with so much stuff that even died-in-the-wool *Rainbow* experts haven't seen it all – until now, that is.

First off though, and to get you into the swing of things, we begin with the story behind *Rainbow Islands*, as translated from arcade manufacturer Taito's original blurb. It's all thrilling stuff (though goodness knows what 'Super Drunk' is exactly meant to mean). A word of warning though – some of the English is, to say the least, 'unusual'...

THE STORYLINE, JAPANESE STYLE

Digest on the previous game, 'Bubble Bobble'.

Bubble and Bobble, who were turned into 'Bubble Dragons' by a wizard, went into the cave of a witch seeking their sweethearts, Betty and Patty. After a long battle and finally getting 'Super Drunk', they could not believe their eyes when they saw their Mom and Dad.

'Dad! And Mom!...'

Big tears were coming out of Mom and Dad's eyes. Bub and Bob were so happy after saving them, not only Patty and Betty, but also their Mom and Dad. All of a sudden, they were back to normal again.

'God, thank you...'

But they were not completely satisfied until they found the real enemy, who turned their parents into 'Super Drunk' and controlled their minds. There is a real enemy still hiding and waiting for Bob and Bub. They knew that sooner or later they had to face him.

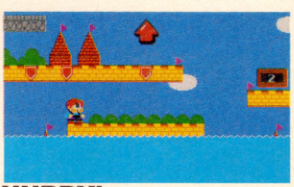
Many years have passed. Bubby and Bobby grew up to be fine boys with power of 'Magic Rainbows' given by Mom and Dad. When they went back to their birth-place to search for treasures, they became involved in a mystery. They went to look for the real enemy, 'Prince Of Darkness'. He has a large following who are in Bubby and Bobby's way. The final day to face the Prince Of Darkness came. Why don't you play the game to find out? The secrets are waiting to be discovered. There are many puzzles you can challenge! Who will be the real winner?

To be honest there can't be a 'real winner' in the Amiga conversion of *Rainbow Islands* (I'll explain why in a minute), but that's not to say it can't be completed – it can, in one of two ways. The problem stems from the fact that when Graftgold started working on it they realised a few compromises would have to be made. Apparently the team originally implemented everything that was in the coin-op, but found they had to drop quite a bit of it due to memory restrictions (and considering the arcade original has over 2Mb of graphic data alone, you can begin to appreciate the reasons why!)

In the finished Amiga version, then, there are seven Islands to conquer, whereas the coin-op had 10. This is why you can't have a 'real winner' – the Japanese plot thingie was referring to the fact that these final three islands ('secret' islands, if you will) only rose out of the water at the end of the game if the player was in possession of all seven large gems on completion of Dragon Island. There are no secret islands in this version, so no 'real' victory. The missing three are Magical Island (with an obvious theme), *Darius* Island (with features and graphics from the eponymous Taito shoot-'em-up) and Bubble Island, which (in keeping with the story) has features and graphics from *Bubble Bobble* – bubbles rising up in front of the screen is one we remember. (This feature has actually been implemented in another form in the Amiga version as one of the Specials – see the next issue).

Along with the final three islands various other interesting features went missing from the Amiga version of the game. One of our favourites was the peculiar special weapon found in the Secret Room at the end of *Darius* Island. It comprises two rainbows, made from the first four colours of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green) and turned through 90 degrees, which shoot out from each side of Bubby and zoom off the screen. (And that's on top of the rainbow magic you've always got!)

The observant among you will have realised that there are only seven colours in the rainbow, each one relating to one of the first seven islands, so what's the score when it comes to the final three islands? Simple – rather than get large gems for collecting seven smaller ones, on these islands Bubby or Bobby receive a Copper, then Silver, then a Gold mirror instead. So now you know.



HURRY!

Bubby or Bobby mustn't dawdle, for the islands are slowly but surely sinking. Should Bubby decide to hang around for too long, a warning sounds and the 'Hurry!' message appears (the time it takes varies from Round to Round). Eight seconds later the water rises.

The trick is not to panic – you see, the water scrolls slightly down with the screen in its early stages of flow, allowing vital seconds to save yourself.

RESTART POSITIONS

The numbers at the right-hand side of a Round represent Restart Positions. This means that should Bubby die with lives remaining he is returned to the last Restart Position passed in the Round. The boys flash invincible for five seconds when they reappear, so take advantage of the situation and go wild.

The place where Bubby dies affects the time remaining before the 'Hurry!' message appears. A percentage of the Round's overall time limit is used, based

MEET BUBBY AND BOBBY

The boys begin with three lives each. An extra life is awarded when 100,000 points are scored, and a second extra life is given for acquiring 1,000,000 points. Thereafter any extra lives are not score-related. Bubby and Bobby can have a maximum of nine lives each, not including the one they have in use.

Bubby and Bobby are very versatile fellows with many talents. The following skills are amongst their repertoire...

WALKING They strut at one of two speeds – normal at first, then faster when the Magic Shoe is worn. Not only can Bubby and Bobby walk on platforms or rainbows, they can bump into enemies too – if the chaps are invincible at the time, that is!

JUMPING The boys' jumping ability extends to 10 different heights. The length of time the jump button is depressed (or the joystick is held in the jump position) determines the height of jump. Bubby and Bobby always jump at least their own height (20 pixels), stopping only when the maximum of 64 pixels is reached.

FALLING Bubby and Bobby are tougher than they look. They can fall any distance and not get hurt – well, unless they land on an enemy or in the water, that is. To slow their descent the boys flap their arms like birds, and this allows them to be steered slightly as they fall. When falling is often advisable to hold down the jump button (or the joystick in the jump position) so that should Bubby or Bobby land on a rainbow they will jump off it rather than break it.

FIRING RAINBOWS As you know, Bubby and Bobby were given the power of Magic Rainbows. This means that both boys are capable of throwing a Magic Yellow Star which leaves a rainbow in its wake. Special potions increase the speed at which the Yellow Star weaves its magic and also its strength, allowing more than a single rainbow to be created with one throw. The star explodes once it has formed its last rainbow.

on the last Restart Position passed. If Bubby dies having just passed Restart Position 1 then he has 80 per cent of the overall Round time to get to the top. The time given from Restart Position 2 is 50 per cent, and finally 30 per cent from Restart Position 3.

GEMS

Enemies crushed with rainbows leave behind Gems where they land. The Gem stays on the screen for only three seconds. It is possible to capture a creature with the edge of a rainbow and break it to get a Gem, but this is difficult and more often than results in the rainbow breaking and the Gem being collected. Gems are worth 700 points each, but they are really worth more than that as you will see...

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR GEM COLOUR

The screen is split into seven invisible vertical zones – one for each colour of the rainbow. Depending on where a beaten enemy lands determines the colour of the Gem it leaves behind. For example, a dead enemy falling to the far left will leave a red Gem. Unless of course it's one of every third alien, which as we all know becomes something special.

Collecting the seven different-coloured Gems results in the Completed message being displayed and an extra life given. A special 100,000 bonus Gem is then thrown out of the chest in the Boss Room (provided the first Gem Bubby collected wasn't red)

The difficult bit is gauging where the Gem will fall. It's worth noting that Gems bounce off the sides of screen. Also, beware of getting 'blocked in' by gems when a colour you don't want happens to fall in your way.

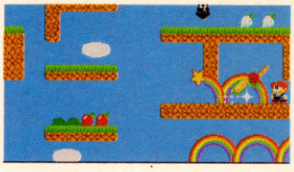
BONUS OBJECTS

Bonus Objects left lying around the islands include fruit, vegetables, cakes, sweets and, less often, treasures. They disappear 20 seconds after they were first viewed.

There's a sequence of 80 increasingly valuable and different items ranging from the Green Pepper, which is worth 10 points, to the Money Bag, which is worth 10,000 points.

Note that the dinky little scores that rise up in the air when you collect bonus objects appear in rainbow colour sequence – a neat touch.

Other items found lying around include the Yellow and Red Magic Stars, and Red Pots, which aren't left about often. All three behave the same as their Feature counterparts (see FEATURES next month).



HIDDEN BONUS OBJECTS

Some Bonus Objects are hidden in the strangest of places. The magic of the rainbows thrown in front of bushes or on the tops of platforms or even in mid-air can cause Bonus Objects to appear – if they were hidden there in the first place – in sequence. So don't be afraid to throw a few rainbows around randomly, especially on Insect Island. On Round 28, the final one, all hidden objects are money bags.

Whenever a Hidden Bonus Object is collected it forces the next Bonus Object in the sequence to appear next. This sequence wraps around back to the Green Pepper once the Money Bag is collected. When Bubby dies the sequence restarts from the Green Pepper.

A maximum of 10 Bonus Objects can exist on screen at once. No more are produced unless any other bonus objects or enemies are removed. When the 'Hurry!' message appears, all Hidden Bonus Objects disappear.

There are some Special items to collect which make all hidden objects appear in one particular form, such as Money Bags or even explosive Red Stars.

GOAL IN!

When Bubby or Bobby reaches the top of the first three rounds of an island, a small magic chest throws out 16 bonus items (from a selection of 32), each one worth 500 points regardless of its type.

THE INHABITANTS OF RAINBOW ISLANDS

The inhabitants start in a happy state, though not happy enough to welcome Bubby and Bobby with open arms. After 12 seconds (less on later islands) the creatures get angry. They also get angry when trapped by a rainbow, or when the 'Hurry!' message appears – every enemy generated thereafter will be angry.

Sometimes creatures stray too far off the top or bottom of the screen. They hang around for approximately five character lines before disappearing for good, which means they can still be killed even though they can't be seen on screen. Similarly Gems or Bonus Objects can be collected.

Killing any single creature (other than a Boss) is worth 1,000 points. Killing more than one creature simultaneously causes the points to mount up, as indicated by the large numbers that rise up the screen. The best way to kill more than one enemy at once is via clever rainbow traps or by exploding Red stars.

Two creatures killed simultaneously are worth 2,000 points, three are worth 4,000 points, four are worth 8,000 points, five are worth 16,000 points, six are worth 32,000 points, seven are worth 64,000 points, and eight creatures killed simultaneously are worth a massive 100,000 points.

A maximum of 16 objects (not including rainbows) can be on screen at once. This could be a maximum of 16 creatures or a minimum of six if other items such as bonus objects are lying around. This obviously has its advantages.

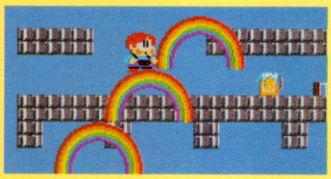
In general, the inhabitants are generated from above Bubby, so keep his head covered as often as possible, either with platforms or rainbows.

Rainbows are far more versatile than they look. They can be walked on, jumped from, used to trap or remove creatures and objects, used as protection to deflect the flying beasts or broken to crush enemies or objects that happen to be lying below.

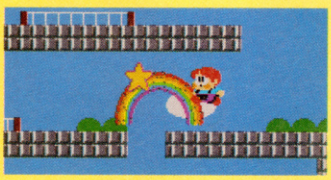
A freshly thrown rainbow stays on screen for approximately 12 seconds before its magic begins to fade and it flashes for a second and disappears.

A maximum of 12 rainbows can be on screen at once, which is enough to allow complex arrangements to be built. The appearance of any more rainbows causes the oldest rainbow to dissolve. However, there are two main exceptions to this: throwing a strip of two rainbows with three bands already on screen causes the oldest band to disappear, as does throwing a strip of three rainbows with two bands of three already on screen. It's up to you whether you prefer to play with fast single rainbows or slightly slower multiples.

RAINBOWS (AND HOW TO USE THEM)



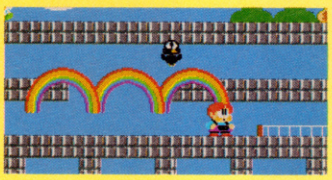
When extra height is required, make a rainbow stairway and walk up it. This comes in handy on the later islands which are platform-starved. Bubby's height of jump is increased when he leaps off a rainbow. Jumping off a rainbow is worth 10 points.



Shoot rainbows and break them almost simultaneously by jumping into the rainbow as soon as it's thrown. This is useful when it comes to dealing with a Boss, as it counts as two hits – one from the Magic Yellow Star and the other from the broken rainbow.

The Magic Yellow Star which produces the rainbows can be used to hit creatures or collect objects. Hitting a creature with the rainbow-producing Star results in a Bonus Object being left behind (see BONUS OBJECTS).

Jumping on a rainbow causes it to crumble and fall, crushing or collecting anything below. Any rainbows connected to it will also fall. This quirk allows Bubby to attach a fuse of sorts to a form of rainbow bomb. Each rainbow crushed is worth 10 points.



The same result can be achieved with a different technique. Throw a rainbow so that the top of it touches a creature or object, then break the rainbow to collect the object or effectively crush the creature (and thus produce a gem – see GEMS).

Finally, bear in mind that most creatures are so dense – or consumed with rage – they fall into rainbows. Take advantage of this by laying traps.

BOSS ROOM

The end of the fourth Round of an island doesn't have a 'Goal In'. Nope, instead it has a Boss Room in which the big Boss of the island resides. The big Bosses are hardy creatures and unlike their smaller kin they require many hits to destroy them. The Boss' energy is shown as bars at top of the screen.

Take advantage of the fact that the Boss doesn't move for a couple of seconds when Bubby first enters the room. The best trick to play on a Boss is to lay a trap of rainbows. As the Boss moves →

THE ISLANDS

Note the figures provided for each Round are for the time it takes for the 'Hurry!' message to appear.

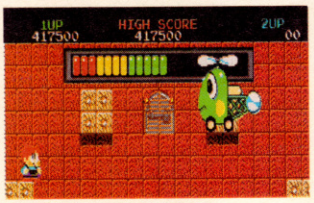
For each inhabitant the name of its true form is provided. This gives you an idea of how it will behave. Any oddities follow NOTES. The difficulty level concerns the speed at which creatures move, fire, get angry and re-evaluate Bubby's position. The difficulty level increases whenever you move to another island, or enter a Secret Room or activate any of the cheat codes.

into it, break the chain – any rainbows touching the Boss will deplete its energy by a unit.

Remember to crush any unused rainbows, otherwise Bubby may find himself walking on them and end up in mid-air with no place to go but Rainbow Islands heaven.

With the Boss out of the way a large magic chest drops to the floor. Like its smaller counterparts found at the end of first three Rounds of every island, this one throws out 16 bonus objects. There's also the added bonus of a large bonus item worth 100,000 points, which makes up for the fact that the Boss isn't worth any points at all.

Note that even in the Boss Room Bubby isn't safe from drowning! After 45 seconds the 'Hurry!' message will roll across the screen, then eight seconds later the water will rise.



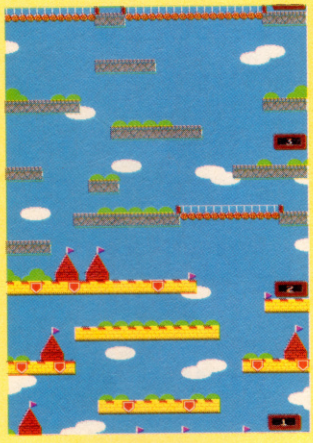
SECRET ROOMS

Collecting all the gems in the correct order – that's in the rainbow sequence from red through to violet – not only results in a Completed bonus but also allows access to a Secret Room. When you reach the end of an island (that's every fourth Round) a Silver Door appears in the Boss Room. Avoid the Boss and touch the entrance to appear in the Secret Room.

There's more to entering a Secret Room than meets the eye. Look at the top of the screen – those hieroglyphics represent the cheat modes (see IF AT FIRSTin the final section). How clever.

INSECT ISLAND

SECRET ROOM FEATURE
Magic Shoe: Permanent Fast Walk



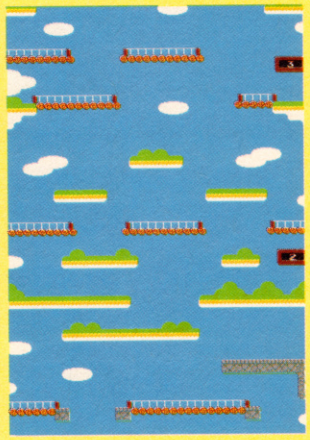
ROUND 1. 55 Seconds

BABY WORM
ZenChan

MINOSUKE
ZenChan
NOTES: The Minosuke, or Bag Worm, only appears once in the entire adventure. It comes encased in a chrysalis hanging from a thread, from which it blows bubbles. In this state is safe to touch. However, when either Bobby or Bubby nears the Minosuke drops down to become an angry Baby Worm.

BEE
Puru Puru

HIVE Puru Puru
NOTES: The Hive drops down from off the screen and releases Bees. It's first encountered on Round 2 where it releases two Bees. On Round 3 it releases three Bees. It's wise to leave the Hive to release its Bees then quickly destroy it for the benefit of an extra enemy.

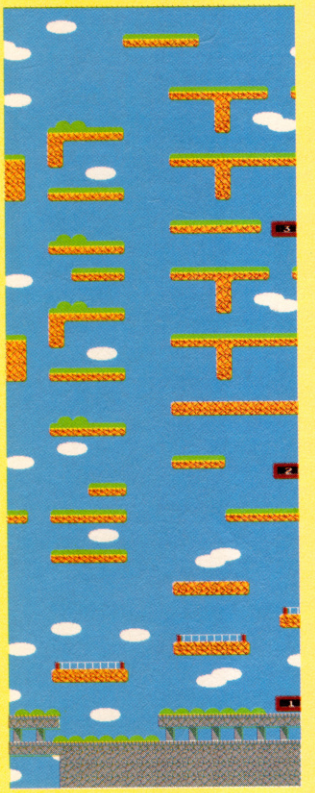


ROUND 2. 50 Seconds

SPIDER
Banebo
NOTES: The baby of the Boss is a tricky little devil. It homes in on Bubby and Bobby's position, spinning webs up the screen to follow them when they are above it. When Bubby or Bubby is on the same level the Spider bounces left or right after them.

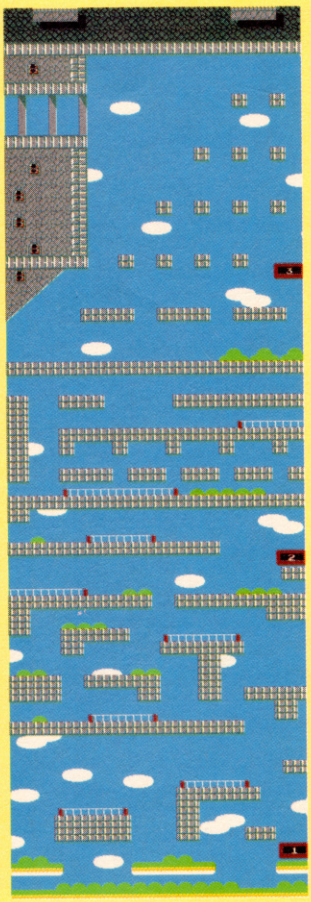
BEETLE
Monster
NOTES: When Bubby or Bubby is above an angry Beetle it flies in straight lines after them. Otherwise the Beetle drops down to their level. The Beetle gets angry quite quickly but doesn't re-evaluate the boys' position very often. It's also capable of climbing over rainbows.

CROW
Monster
NOTES: The Crow hatches from an Egg, which is also a Monster. It stops regularly to check the boys' position.



ROUND 3. 60 Seconds

BIG MOM SPIDER BOSS
She stands between Bubby and Bobby and the second island. She's asleep at the top of the screen (her eyes are closed) when her room is first entered. She awakens as she drops down from her web then bounces after you. The best trick is to throw as many rainbows as possible beneath her before she drops. When she hits the rainbows, break 'em. Walk back and forth across the screen as she bounces, unleashing and breaking rainbows in the process. Alternatively, a fully-equipped Bubby can go straight to the top of the room and throw four successive strings of rainbows at her. She should be dead before she even gets a chance to awake.



ROUND 4. 55 Seconds

COMBAT ISLAND

TANK Hi De Gonsu
NOTES: Shoots a single bullet which travels just under half the screen's width.

TRUCK Zenchan

HELICOPTER Puru Puru

BOMBER Invader

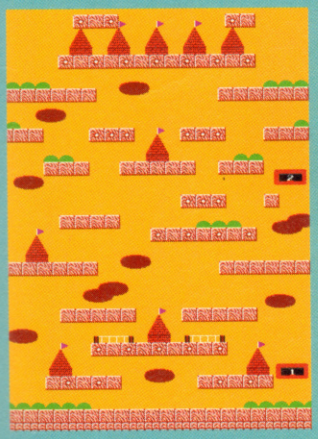
GUN Maitta
NOTES: Shoots out a deadly bouncing bomb which behaves similarly to a Banebo. But it isn't.

BUNKER & SOLDIER Banebo

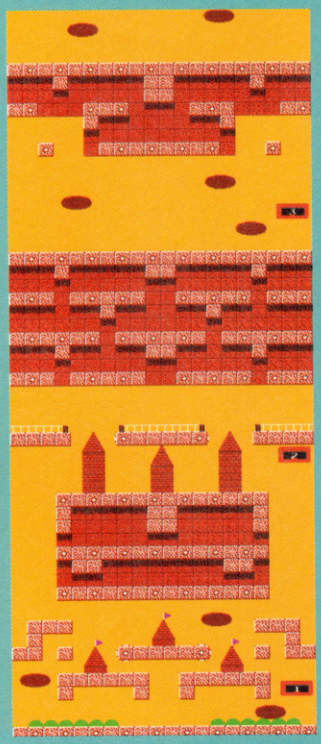
NOTES: Sits there harmless enough (Bubby and Bobby can even touch it) until its eyes appear. Then it throws out two bouncing bombs. If the Bunker is crushed, the Soldier will die. If the Bunker is hit with the Magic Yellow Star, the Soldier will appear and be very angry.

BIG HELICOPTER BOSS
Its movement pattern is easy to follow. It flies back and forth , re-evaluating Bubby's position when it reaches the sides of the screen and then moving vertically to match his height. Your best bet is to try to create rainbows at the top of the screen and drop them on the Helicopter. Try not to get caught at the sides.

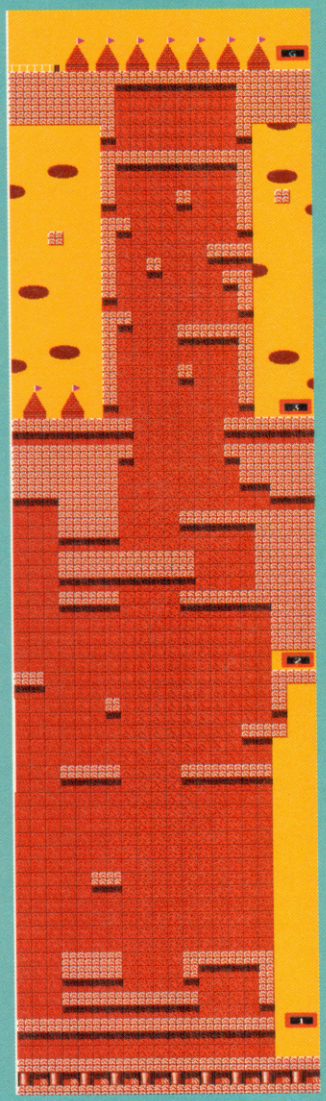
ROUND 5. 40 Seconds



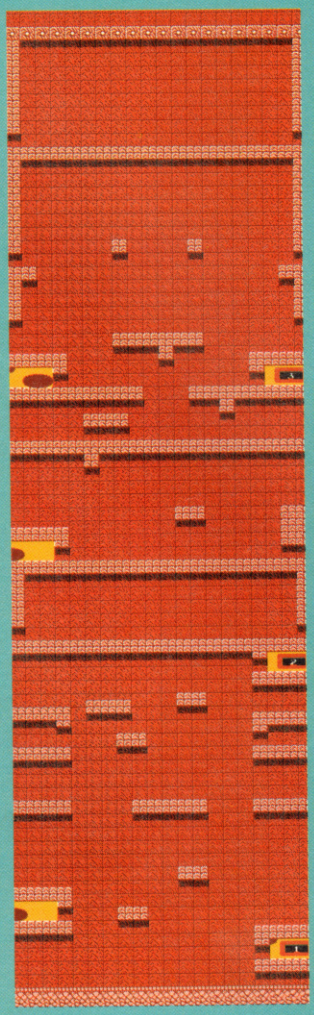
ROUND 6. 40 Seconds



ROUND 7. 100 Seconds



ROUND 8. 60 Seconds



SECRET ROOM FEATURE
Red Pot One: Permanent Double Rainbow

ALTERED STATES

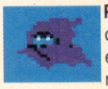
The Boss Of Shadow has used a Disguise Spell on his minions. Collecting the Crystal Ball breaks the spell. Now when an enemy is killed is spins away in its true form... as one of the *Bubble Bobble* baddies. The eight *Bubble Bobble* baddies appear in different forms depending on the Island's theme. Each alter ego behaves similarly to its real self. For example, *Rainbow* Islanders which bounce about a lot are more often than not the Banebo in disguise.

INVADER This is actually the original Taito invader. Just the like the original, it moves back and forth across the screen, though this guy drops bombs. It first appears as the Bomber on Combat Island.

ZENCHAN Generally walks back and forth along platforms, turning only when it reaches a gap or blockage. Unless it's angry, in which case it falls down holes and turns to walk in Bubby's direction. On later islands the ZenChan always falls down holes, regardless of mood. It's also capable of walking over rainbows, so watch out. The ZenChan first appears as the Baby Worm on Insect Island.

HI DE GONSU It behaves pretty much like the ZenChan only it fires. The life expectancy of the projectiles – the distance they travel – increases on later islands. The 'older' Hi De Gonsu will fire in Bubby's general direction, then eventually it will jump after him. The Hi De Gonsu first appears as the Tank on Combat Island.

BANEBO It bounces horizontally towards Bubby, jumping after him if he rises above it. Later incarnations wait until Bubby nears before it reacts. The Banebo first appears as the Spider on Insect Island.

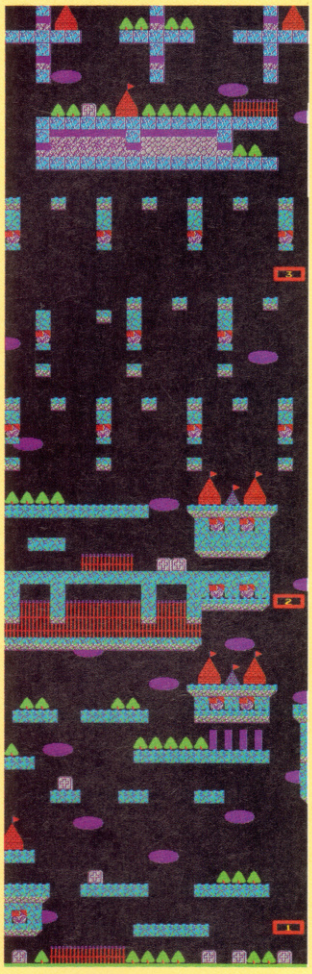


PURU PURU The least dangerous of the flying enemies, the Puru Puru moves in an obvious pattern at approximately 30 degrees to the horizon. It turns only when it collides with solid scenery. The Puru Puru first appears as the Bee (and the Hive) on Insect Island.

MAITTA It behaves pretty much like the ZenChan and Hi De Gonsu. Initially the Maitta fires a single projectile but eventually it fires more often and across greater distances. It also passes through platforms, so beware. The Maitta first appears as the Gun on Combat Island.

MONSTER The other flying enemy. It homes in on Bubby and stops regularly to check on his position. Later incarnations move faster and in shorter bursts, checking Bubby's position more often. The Monsters first appears as the Beetle and Crow (and the Egg from which it hatches).

DRUNK It only appears on the last three Islands – of the original arcade version.



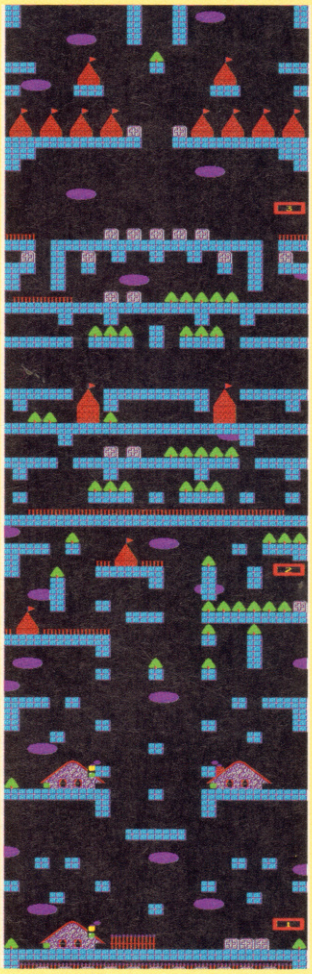
ROUND 9. 90 Seconds

FRANKENSTEIN
Zenchan

WEREWOLF
Hi De Gonsu
NOTES: Wanders back and forth on its platform, stopping to shoots a single fireball across the width of the screen in Bubby's general direction – and that's regardless of whether he's on the same horizontal line or not.

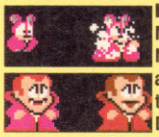
SKELETON
Banebo
NOTES: It starts life as a skull on the ground – until Bubby gets close enough whereupon it springs into action. The Skeleton attempts extra high jumps whenever Bubby gets above it.

BAT
Monster
NOTES: It



ROUND 10. 105 Seconds

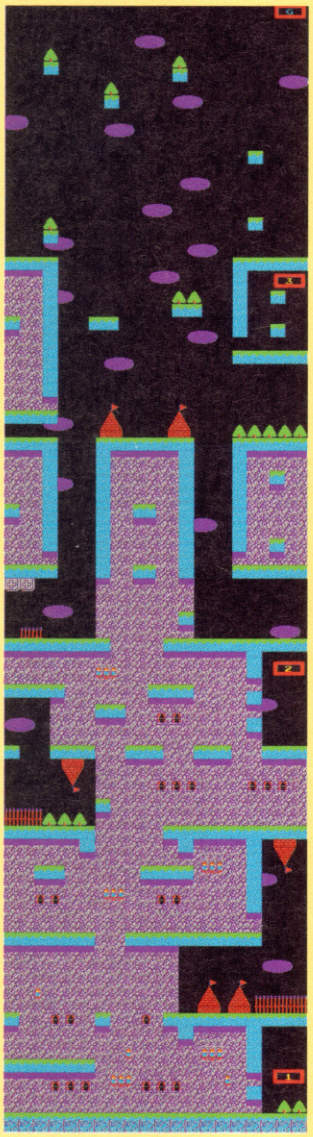
hangs upside down until Bubby comes into range whereupon it flies after him. In many respects it's not much worse than the Crow.



DRACURA
Monster
NOTES: He starts as a pink bat then transforms into Dracura when he gets close enough to Bubby. He then infrequently fires a lightning bolt in Bubby's general direction.

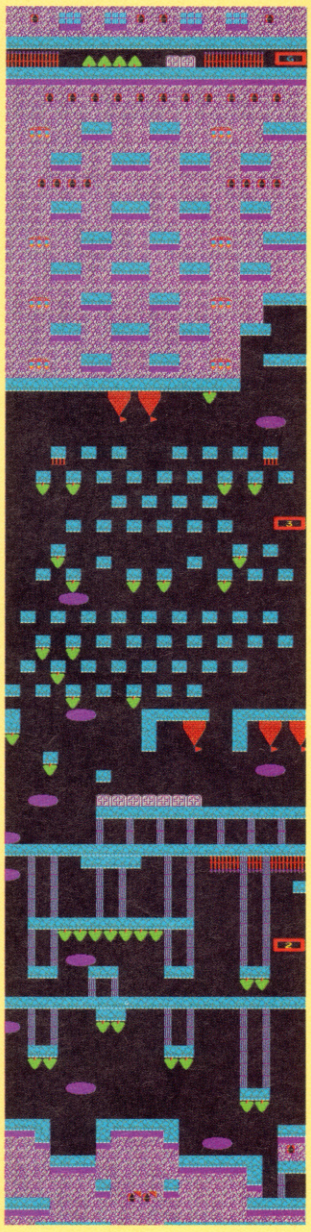
GHOST
Invader
NOTES: It's not quite like the Invader as it moves at 45 degree angles, but it's similar enough.

BIG DRACURA BOSS
He's one of the worst Bosses you are likely to meet. Dracura moves very much like his smaller brothers, only when he stops to re-



ROUND 11. 120 Seconds

evaluate Bubby's position, he shakes his cape to let an arc of six big bats fly out in Bubby's general direction. Shoot them. Dracura moves towards Bubby in a straight line. The best advice available is keep moving around the outskirts of the screen, laying traps as you go. Actually, because of the slightly smaller screen, this Boss Room is marginally harder than the arcade original.



ROUND 12. 165 Seconds

SECRET ROOM FEATIURE
Yellow Pot: Permanent Fast Rainbow

MONSTER ISLAND

NEXT MONTH All 42 Specials are revealed (and you just won't believe the things some of them do). Plus! The final four islands AND all the cheat codes. Don't miss it!

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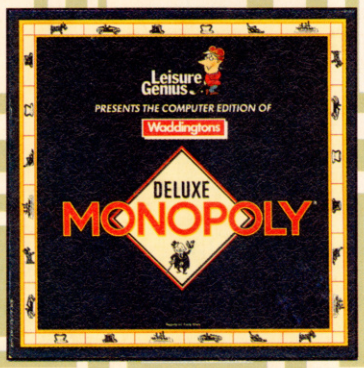

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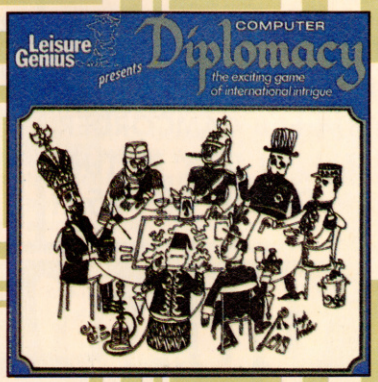

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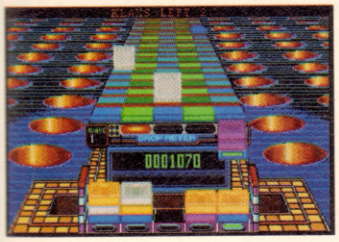


27. SWIV
Pause the game and type 'NCC-1701' for infinite lives.

28. INDY JONES ADVENTURE
To get the Grail diary, pick up all the rubbish on your desk. To get the bottle of wine in the restaurant, read the label.

29. F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
For practically all missions, carry as many Mavericks as possible, along with some Sidewinders for maximum massacre capability. Also, if the enemy are giving you a hard time, land near a runway and taxi to the edge of it (but not onto it), then shut down your engines and wait. Bizarrely, this will cause the enemy to get bored and clear off.

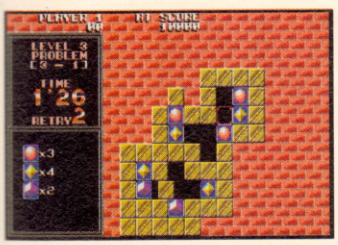
30. E-MOTION
To get the secret bonuses.
BONUS 1 - Complete a bonus level with the last digit of the timer showing a three.
BONUS 2 - Collect four pods in a row without creating any new balls.
BONUS 3 - Collect the last blue pod of a bonus level first.
BONUS 4 - Complete a level without ever wrapping around the screen.
BONUS 5 - Complete a level without ever rotating right.

31. CAPTIVE
In the earlier stages, brute force is your best friend. It's a good idea then, to trade your droids' experience points for brawling skills and simply clobber all the opposition.

32. POWERMONGER
Don't kill all the sheep. No, really.

33. XENON 2
Do it to them before they do it to you.

34. PUZZNIC
Assume the illogical, the right move in *Puzznic* is very rarely the most obvious one. If you start a level by taking the

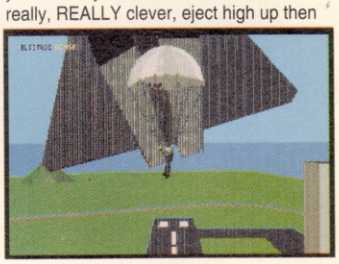


most roundabout routes to blocks, you'll more often than not find things fall quickly into place.

35. SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER
Win every race by the narrowest margin you can. (Sit just in front of the line until

the computer cars are about to catch you). This will make the opposition slower in the next race.

36. F-29 RETALIATOR
Landing can be a real bitch in this game, so when you complete a mission, simply fly over your base and eject. It'll cost you some points, but who cares about points? Besides, it's fun to watch the plane as you parachute down, and even more fun when you realise you can still control it! To be really, REALLY clever, eject high up then



turn the plane round and crash into yourself. Laugh? I nearly donated my kidneys to medical research, by accident.

37. VAXINE
In the course of play type 'WILDEBEESTE', then F1 and F3 will advance you one and ten levels respectively, and F2 and F4 will go back levels in similar style.

38. INTERPHASE
During play type 'Fenny' (with a capital 'F') to access the 'object viewer utility'.

39. CASTLE MASTER
To kill the ultimate baddie, wipe out all the other spirits in the castle first, then shoot

him in the forehead. Incidentally, if you can't find any spirits in the dungeon, think rodent...

40. CAR-VUP
Enter these codes on the high score table.
PUSSYCAT - To give you nine lives
BUMPER - Equips you with a bumper at the start of every level
ARNIECAR - 100,000 point bonus
WOAARRGGH - Gives you a Speed Turn

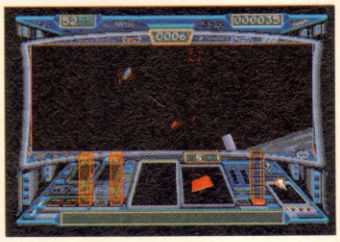
WHOOPSIE - Start on the Prehistoric level.

41. SUPER HANG-ON

Enter '750J' on the high score table to be an altogether more formidable proposition on the road.

42. PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Change your name to 'Dorothy', it'll help you identify with your player better. (Hey, it's a brand new game, you don't want us to spoil it for you, do you?)

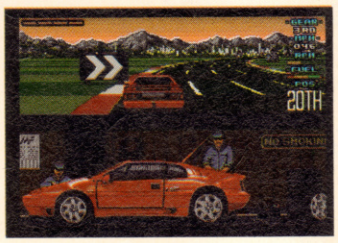
43. STARGLIDER 2
Start the game, press 'F', slow your craft to a standstill, then press 'DEL' to pause. Now type 'WERE ON A MISSION FROM GOD' and press '1'. From now on,



pressing 'K' will arm your ship with enough weaponry to decimate most of the free-thinking universe. (You fascist.)

44. SHANGHAI
If you can possibly help it, don't move tiles which you can see three of.

45. LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE
Define the player names as 'MONSTER' and 'SEVENTEEN' for an especially rocky ride (chortle!).



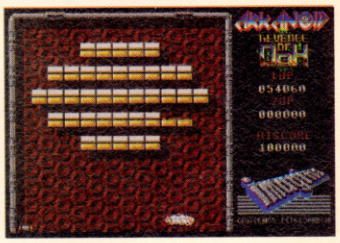
Alternatively, define as 'FIELDS OF FIRE' and 'IN A BIG COUNTRY' and qualify without even trying!

46. OPERATION STEALTH
To escape from the cave, operate the stones on the ground then use the ropes on the metal object. Operate the ground (?) to find the pick-axe, then operate the pick-axe where the fresh air is coming from until there's a hole big enough for you to walk through.

47. WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD
Wear some plus-fours while playing the

game. It won't improve your scores, but it WILL make every game a much more fulfilling experience.

48. ARKANOID 2 - REVENGE OF DOH



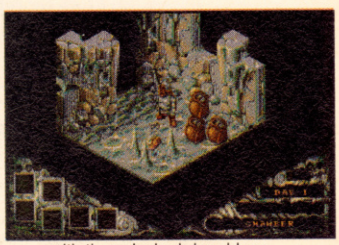
Hold down the left mouse button while the game is loading for an odd little commercial break.

49. BATTLE SQUADRON
Start the game and type 'CASTOR' for invincibility. F6 to F10 will now choose weapons, and F1 to F5 will vary your weapon power.

50. TOWER OF BABEL
When collecting klondikes, turn the grabber to face them and programme it with fire, right, right, right, right, and fire again. The game will think you've collected two klondikes, so each level is now only half as much trouble.

51. WINGS
See '*TV Sports Football*'.

52. CADAVER
In level 3, if you go to the Royal Court and touch Wulf, he'll give you a quest. Fulfil the quest and return, and he'll give you another quest and a new key to help you



cope with those locked-door blues.

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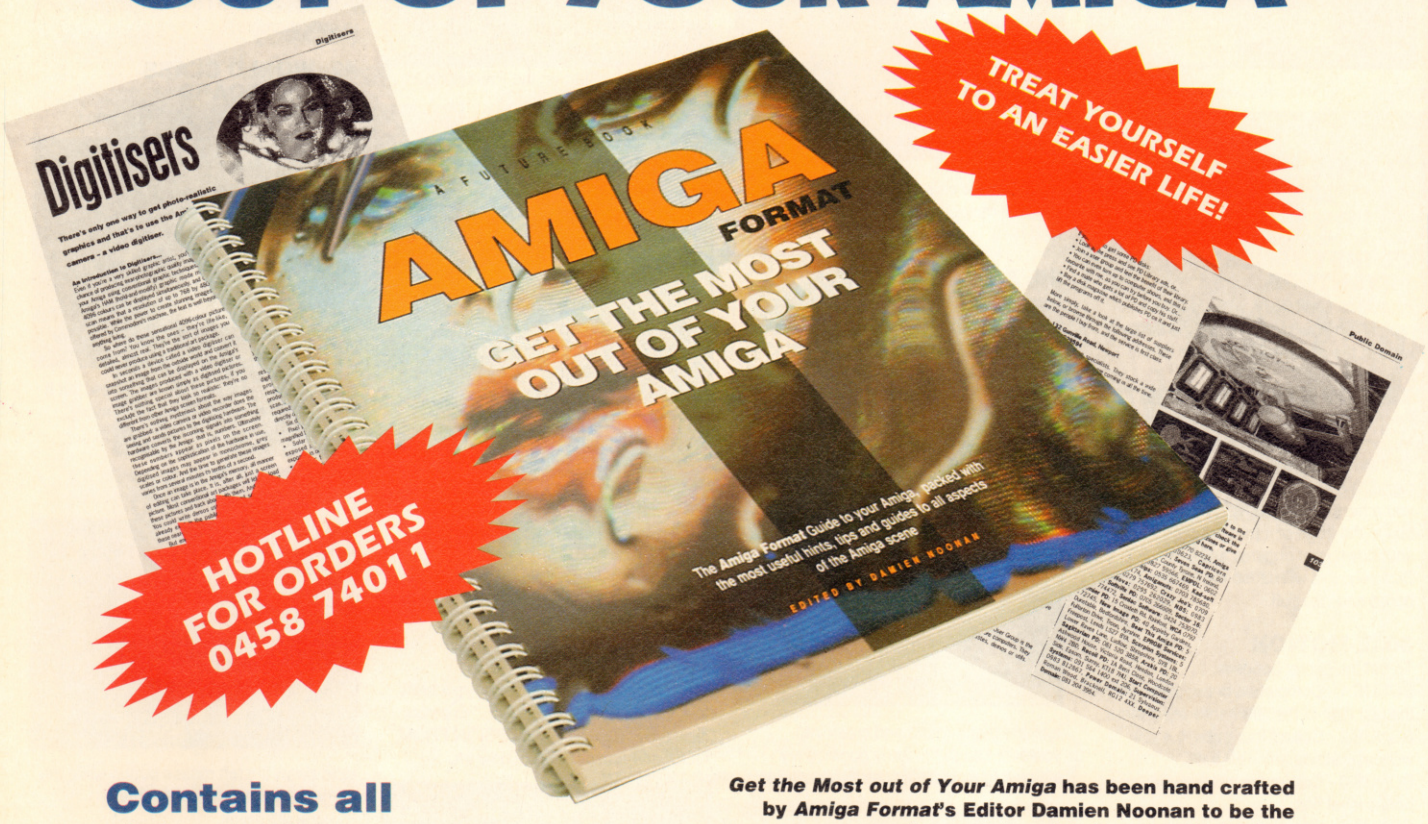

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(Including the locked-door-to-the-fourth-level blues)

53. BUBBLE BOBBLE

If playing in one-player mode, you may find that your 5 credits are wasted. To make better use of them, plug 2 joysticks in and when player 1 is about to lose his last life, press player 2's fire button. Play normally, but every time you are about to die, continue using the other player, and you'll get a lot more screens for your money.

54. LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

When you get your divorce papers, read them before you give them to Patti to save yourself some embarrassment (and gain some points).

55. ARCHIPELAGOS

At the start, choose level 8421 then press Enter twice, to select any island from 1 to 9999.

56. HELTER SKELTER

Some level codes.
SPIN - level 11
FLIP - level 21
GOAL - level 41

LEFT - level 51
TWIN - level 61
PLAY - level 71

57. BOMBUZAL

Some more level codes.
ROSS - level 8
SINK - level 28
IRON - level 40
TAPE - level 52
RING - level 64
SPOT - level 76
OPAL - level 88
SAFE - level 100
LAMP - level 112
EYES - level 124
MYTH - level 148

58. BATTLE COMMAND

Use the external views as much as you can, as they'll give you a much better idea of where attacks are coming from.

59. THE KILLING GAME SHOW

It might not seem like it, but the key to success in *The Killing Game Show* is mapping. If you learn all the attack patterns and platform formations, you'd have a tougher time falling out of a tree than you would completing this game. And that's all the help you're getting, to make it any easier I'd have to come round to your house and do it for you. Next!

60. IK+

Whenever you get knocked down, press Space followed by the fire button. You will be invulnerable for the rest of the round.

61. WARHEAD

To evade missiles, the best bet is to fly away backwards in front of them at a range of about 3000m. (The second best bet is to stay safely encamped in Solbase for the whole game and watch the telly.)

62. F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR

For extra missions, type '2' to get into free flight, then before choosing your plane press '6', '7', '8', or '9'. You can (indeed, you have to) work out the rest for yourself.

63. FUTURE WARS

To rescue the King's daughter, you must first enter the monastery... (Enigmatic, aren't we?)

64. NIGHTSHIFT

Yet more level codes.
(B=Banana, C=Cherry, L=Lemon, P=Plum, A=Pineapple)
CBBL - level 2
BCAP - level 3
ALAP - level 4
AALC - level 5
CPPA - level 6
ABAC - level 8
LBPP - level 10
CPBP - level 12
ACPB - level 14

65. SILKWORM

Hold down 'HELP' and press fire to start the game. This should give you infinite lives and level-skipping with the keys 1-0. If it doesn't work, access the control selection screen and type SCRAP28 then Return, and truely Robert should indeed be your uncle.

66. MIDWINTER

Don't bother with all that tedious faffing around with recruitment, just head straight for the enemy HQ with some dynamite and introduce them to Mr. Huge Explosion. Also, if you start every game by clicking the mouse in exactly the same place on the 'START' screen, every game will be set up identically.

67. PACMANIA

Oh come on, be serious!

68. KID GLOVES

Pause the game and type 'RHIANNON'. Now F8 gives you loads of cash, F6 takes you to the shop, and F9 toggles invulnerability.

69. PROJECTYLE

Use the scanner to pick up off-screen freeze capsules. In your own zone, hang around the goalmouth until someone takes

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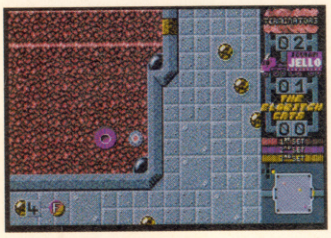
a shot. This should give you a chance to get the ball straight into the tunnel in the shortest possible time, while decreasing the risk of conceding goals.



70. BALANCE OF POWER 1990

Listen to your advisers. You CAN win in situations they don't like, but it's not worth starting WW3 for, which is frequently the outcome.

71. RICK DANGEROUS

Enter 'POOKY' onto the high score table to start from any level previously reached.

72. LOOM

Listen carefully to the Guild Of Glassmakers. They cast spells which you can hear and then copy for your own use.

73. ROCKET RANGER

Don't ask me, I can't play the bloody thing to save my life.

74. ST. DRAGON

Press Caps Lock during play and type 'DECAFFEINATED', then press Return and Caps Lock again for invincibility. Or, if you're not a complete jessie, type Caps Lock, 'WHATS WRONG NEVER SEEN A GUY WHO SLEPT WITH A FISH BEFORE', Return and Caps Lock for infinite lives. For a bit of a giggle, replace the words in quotes with 'I HATE THE RADION ADVERT' or 'KYLIE'. Finally, for a real challenge, complete level 1 without shooting anything except the end-of-level robot cow. (Use your tail!)

75. ELITE

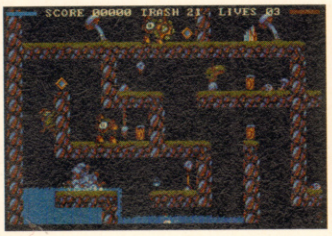
On the protection screen, enter 'SARA' as the word from the manual. At the second attempt, proceed with the protection as normal, and you'll then be able to 'poke' certain values to increase your cargo and weaponry by pressing '★' (ie the asterisk).

76. QUARTZ

When your energy gets low, simply stand still and don't fire to build it back up again.

77. FLOOD

Even more level codes.
LONG - level 4
GRIP - level 8
VINE - level 12
GRIT - level 16
POOL - level 20
QUID - level 24
HEAD - level 28
PINK - level 32
BRIL - level 36
SOAP - level 40

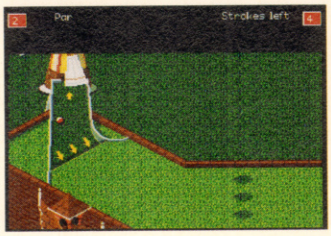


78. BUGGY BOY

The only way to really big points is to hit the flags in order, so go out of your way to get the right colours. The same applies to extra time flags – if you know where they are it doesn't take any more time to get to them, and they can make the difference between reaching the checkpoint and failing dismally.

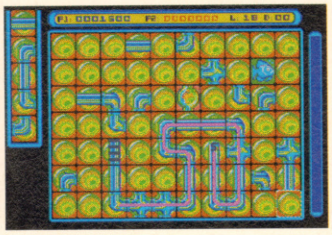
79. ZANY GOLF

Cabbage cabbage giraffe cabbage. There, you can't ask for anything much zanier than that.



80. PIPE MANIA

Guess what? It's some level codes.
BALL
BLOB
WILD
DOCK
GRIP
OOZE



81. TOTAL ECLIPSE

Hold down '1' and '9' and press fire for a little surprise.

82. DRAGON BREED

Pause and type 'IREM' for infinite lives and level selection with the 'N' key.

83. JAMES POND

Type 'JUNKYARD' during the title sequence. Start the game and press Return, then the bottom row keys ('Z' to '/') access levels 3-12 respectively, Return toggles the protective fairy, 'D' unlocks padlocks, and F10 will take you to the "Techsperts' Delight". Whatever that is.

84. VENUS: THE FLY TRAP

Swipe me, it's time for some level codes again.
MANTIDS - level 2
CICADAS - level 3
PSYLLIDS - level 4
PIERIDS - level 5
SATYRID - level 6
LYCAENID - level 7
PYRALID - level 8
NOCTUID - level 9
Typing 'JUPITER' will also give you infinite time, and 'PLUTO' provides infinite ammo. Clever doggy.

85. TETRIS

Buy a Game Boy.

86. TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL

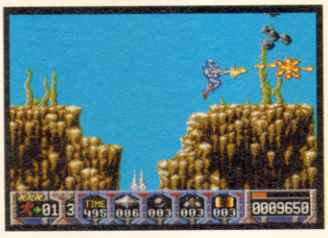
Buy another disk drive.

87. DISTANT ARMIES

Make sure you collect lots of power-ups before taking on the big end-of-level guardian on the Chaturanga level.

88. TURRICAN

Type 'BLUESMOBIL' for 99 extra lives.



89. TREASURE TRAP

Make better use of your keys by dropping them on the floor, where they will deflect the path of oncoming monsters.

90. BATMAN THE MOVIE

On the title screen type 'JAMMMM', then skip levels with F10.

91. SWITCHBLADE

Enter 'POOKY' on the high score table. Now press 1 to 5 before you press fire to start a game, and you'll start on the relevant level.

92. SUPERCARS

Enter your name as RICH to start with £500,000.

93. THEIR FINEST HOUR

Oh look, I don't know, fly around and shoot all the bad guys or something. You don't expect me to be brilliant at ALL these games, do you?

94. MIG-29

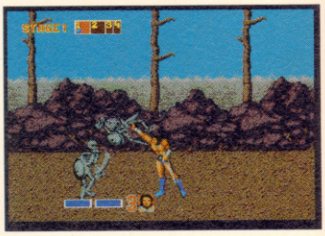
Don't rely heavily on your missile locking system. Even with a red lock you're liable to miss unless you've got a good position, so get right in close before you unleash any air-to-air death devices.

95. MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS

Enter 'SEMPRINI' on the high score table for a menu of new options. Also, try the old 'POOKY' routine again.

96. GOLDEN AXE

Whatever you do, don't get knocked off the edge of the 5th level. You'll regret it...



97. GHOULS'N'GHOSTS

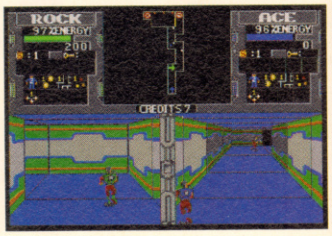
Type 'KAREN BROADHURST' during play for invincibility.

98. RED STORM RISING

Avoid firing missiles unless you're running very deep (note authoritative use of submarining terminology there, fact fans), as you'll just give your position away. (It says here.)

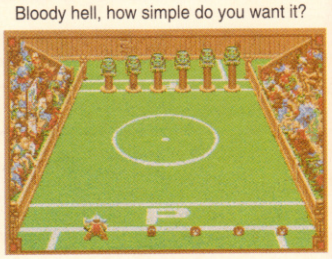
99. XYBOTS

Enter 'ALF' on the high score table, and you'll cop yourself a load of add-ons in the next game.



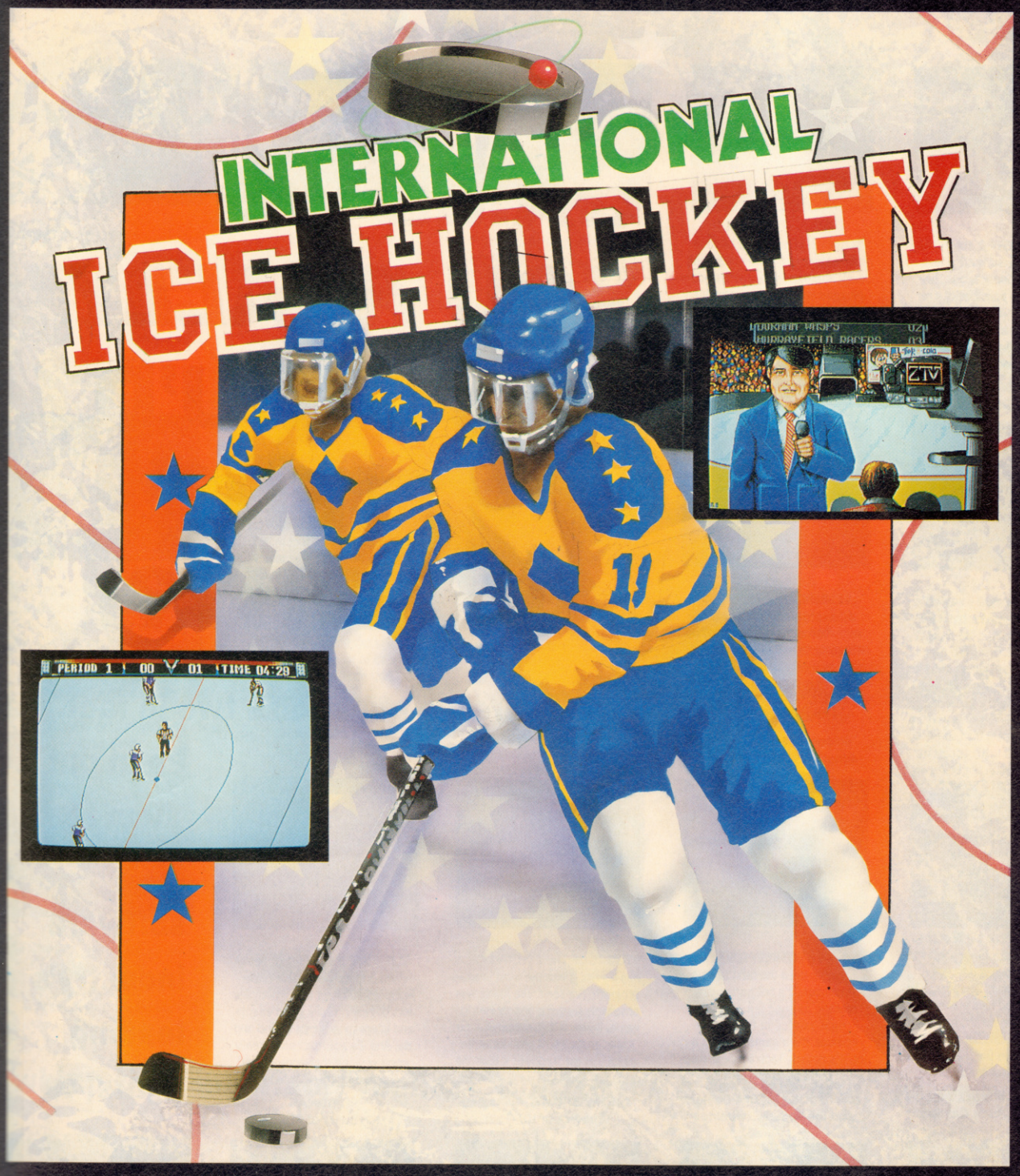
100. GRAND MONSTER SLAM

Bloody hell, how simple do you want it?



Contributions: Stuart Campbell, Gary Penn, Mark Ramshaw, Maff Evans, Daniel Moore, Daniel Pemberton, Harvy.

And there we have it – the end of our very first Complete Control. Remember the message at the other end (to start contributing tips now!) and see you next month for *Rainbow Islands* and more!



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IMPULZE

WHICH AMIGA GAME DO YOU *REALLY* WISH YOU'D WRITTEN? (AND WHY?)

Well, there's a question – two in fact. Gary Penn put them to some of the software industry's leading lights, to

'DUNGEON MASTER. I think they could've done a lot more with it. I'd have broadened it out.The science fiction possibilities are enormous – in fact I think they were planning to do it but they didn't. It's still a superb game – very playable and very deep.'

STEVE SCREECH
Designer *Kick Offs 1 & 2*

'NOTHING. I don't really use my Amiga. Most of the time it doesn't work and even if it does it's not plugged in. Any programming I did on it was done on the ST.'

PAUL SHIRLEY
Author *Quartz* and *Spindizzy Worlds*

'PIPEMANIA. I thought it was quite good. I could be wrong but it was the fact that it looked like it didn't take two years to do it. The things I do take a long time and an awful lot of effort is spent figuring out what's going in. But with a game like *PipeMania* it's a simple idea which is easier to implement than some of the deeper stuff that's appearing now. It'd be nice if at the beginning of a project you could see the finished product and you knew what was going to go into it. When you start with a blank sheet and only an idea of the sort of thing you want to do, you could do so much only to have to scrap it. Something like *Stunt Car* was harder to do than a conventional racing game because its terms weren't so easily defined as it's all made up, whereas with real life simulations you have a comparison to hand. Something like *PipeMania* is good idea – whether it took someone six months to think of the idea I don't know, but that's what I like about games like that: a good idea that's well executed.'

GEOFF CRAMMOND, Author *The Sentinel, Stunt Car Racer*

'LEMMINGS. It's refreshingly different and fun too. We're all very impressed with it here. And it's going to make lots of money, I'm sure.'

ANDY BEVERIDGE
The Assembly Line

'F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR. It's always been the best flight simulation. It's not particularly realistic as such but it has the right balance of flying and combat. It's a game I played a lot. It's nothing technically special but it plays the best.'

DAVID JONES, DMA Design and the author *Lemmings*

'KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALLION. It was a gem. It was the most unusual program I've seen. The music was absolutely fantastic and so was the game. It wasn't that successful, but it was an excellent product all the same. I'm not surprised it took the author a couple of years to write.'

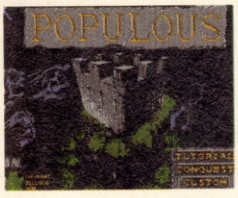
GEOFF BROWN, Managing Director of US Gold

'TURRICAN. It's just really, really good and it's got lots of really, really good things in it. There are lots of really, really good effects and interesting things to find and do. And it's got that really, really good weapon that goes around you and goes 'Wang!'.'

JO BONAR
Producer of Probe

'SHADOW OF THE BEAST. Because it sold loads. Computer games ARE art but there's no point in being pretentious about it – at the end of the day the aim of the game is to make money.'

ANDREW WRIGHT
Director Virgin Games

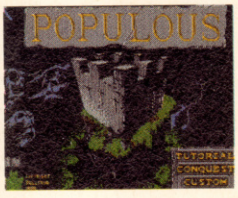


'POPULOUS. Apart from being original in every sense of the word, it was very very playable, forging new frontiers in terms of computer entertainment. And it enjoyed great commercial success.'

GARY BRACEY
Ocean

'DUNGEON MASTER. It kept us addicted for weeks and weeks. It's big, well designed and easy to get into. The learning curve is perfect, and it's got just that right balance of fighting and puzzle solving. We've got a lot of respect for FTL.'

STEVE KELLY, one of the Bitmap Brothers



'POPULOUS. There's a lot of original stuff in it. Actually, it wasn't totally original. It managed to draw on other ideas without actually copying them. Erm... none of which spring to mind.'

JOHN PHILLIPS
Author *Nebulus* and *Eliminator*

'DUNGEON MASTER. Because it took the longest time to hack and therefore had the longest shelf life.'

IAN HETHERINGTON
Managing Director & Software Development Manager of Psygnosis

'RAINBOW ISLANDS. It's just such a near-perfect conversion. The gameplay's smashing, and the graphics are spot on. It's definitely one of the best conversions ever seen. Overall a top product. And best of all – it eventually got out.'

SIMON PHIPPS
Core Design

'TURRICAN. It's the first game I've seen on the Amiga that's technically very competent and very, very playable, with lots of moving objects on screen. It's also the first Amiga game that's made me want to finish it and made me feel I could.'

ANDREW BRAYBROOK
Graftgold

'LEMMINGS. There's just so much playability in it.'

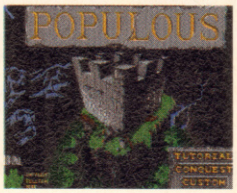
MARK CALE
Managing Director of System 3

'DUNGEON MASTER. I think it was the first role playing game to break the mould of just being a clone of *Ultima* or *Wizardry*. FTL threw away all the interface stuff and made it easy and more enjoyable for people to play it. They did such a good job. There have been so many clones since but nobody has come up to their standard simply because it's hard to conceive of a better designed interface. *Captive* – which no-one could deny is a DM clone – isn't as well crafted. And underneath that interface you've got a really good role playing game with really good puzzles. The reason I admire all that is because it would be easy to stop after the interface but what makes it really great is the combination of all those elements – they spent months and months getting the balance right, and it takes lot of courage – or money – to do that.'

PETER MOLYNEUX
Designer And Programmer for Bullfrog

'LEMMINGS. It's addictive and simple and cute and has all the properties of a good game. And I'm sure it will make money.'

JEZ SAN, Argonaut

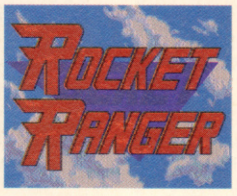


'POPULOUS. Not just because it's a brilliant game, but because if I'd done it I'd have had more features – like monsters that did weird and wonderful things. It does get a bit bland playing with soldiers. It have been nice to have been able to do a few more things.'

TONY CROWTHER
Author of *Captive*

'LEMMINGS. I'd have loved to have written it because it's such a clever game. I really like the way it actually works. It's the fact that you have have indirect control rather than direct, and set off all sorts of chain reactions. It's cute too.'

MIKE SINGLETON
Maelstrom



'ROCKET RANGER. All the games in it are really simple but they all fit together really well.'

TONY BECKWITH
Project Manager, Mirrorsoft

'DUNGEON MASTER. It's just wonderful. It's probably my favourite game of all time. I just love the atmosphere really. It's the game that's most drawn me into it.'

HERMAN SERRANO
Artist & Designer *Weird Dreams*

'LEMMINGS. Last year I had a similar idea for that style of game, except it was a war with little soldiers. It was one army against another where you just give them a mission and they go away and do it. But Lemmings is so playable and intellectual. And funny.'

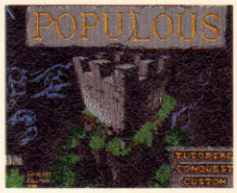
MARC DJAN, Managing Director of Ocean France

'NONE.
It hasn't been written. Yet.'

PAUL WALKER
Arc Developments

'F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR. There wasn't a lot to it and it wasn't particularly realistic, but it was very playable and there were a lot of nice features. The sound's particularly impressive – it really gives a feeling of power and speed. Try running it with the sound off and you can see how slow it really is.'

GLYN WILLIAMS
Author of *Warhead*



'POPULOUS, because it's original.'
And?
'And that's it.'

DAVID BRABEN
Author *Virus* & Co-Author *Elite*

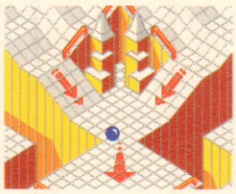
'LEMMINGS. It looks as though it was easy to write, it's great fun to play and it'll make loads of money.'

IAN OLIVER
Realtime

which they invariably replied: 'Ooh, that's a tricky one.' After a bit of thought though, here's what they had to say...

'KICK OFF. Because it sold well and it deserved to sell well, unlike certain other games which promise more than they deliver.'

JON HARE
Orchestrating Director of Sensible Software



'MARBLE MADNESS. It's a simple idea that's very well executed. It's the only one he played for some time.'

BRUCE JORDAN Novagen
On Behalf Of PAUL WOAKES
Author *Mercenary* and *Damocles*

'SPEEDBALL. When it came out it was just completely wonderful and nobody had played anything quite as good as that. I'd liked to have generated that level of enthusiasm with a product.'

TOM WATSON
Renegade

'LEMMINGS. The attention to detail and cuteness of animation – I'd like to have captured that.'

ARCHER MACLEAN
Author *IK+*

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RENEGADE AND THE BITMAP BROTHERS

TOM WATSON

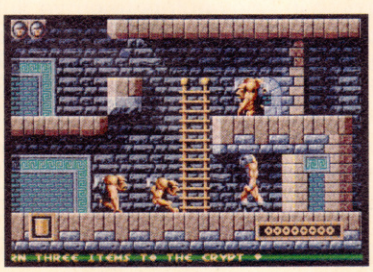
What *are* they trying to do? Is it working? (And who the hell do they think they are?) Perhaps it's time, suggests Matt Bielby, someone really asked them...

The *real* Bitmap Brothers in typical rock star pose – from left to right, Eric Matthews in Bitmap Kid gear (see box-out on the next page), Mike Montgomery and Steve Kelly.

You all know the basic story, of course. Last year the highly publicised Bitmap Brothers – certainly the industry's best know programming team, and arguably its best – upped and left the protective wing of Mirrorsoft, who'd published their hits *Speedballs 1* & *2*, *Xenon 2* and *Cadaver*. It was quite a shock to many people – though Mirrorsoft are on record as saying they'd seen it coming – especially when they set up shop with (of all things) an indie record company.

With the three original Bitmap Brothers – Eric Matthews, Steve Kelly and Mike Montgomery – firmly established as directors of the new Renegade outfit, it was the nearest thing to self-publishing on a major scale that the UK industry had ever seen. Many people were willing it to fail, quite a few wanted to see it succeed, but all were watching. And the Bitmap/Renegade crew, never shrinking violets at the best of times, made sure that there was something to watch too, with a string of quotes and barbed comments that pointed out plenty of the idiocies of the software status quo. It was quite some going for an outfit that had yet to release a single game.

All that's about to change though. The first Bitmaps/Renegade product, *Gods*, is at last shipping out and is reviewed this very issue. Stage one of the plan – that they'd actually manage to get a product out there – now seems more or less complete, so it seemed like a good time to talk to them about how things have been working out. Over the page programmer Sean Griffiths, one of the newer generation of Bitmaps, talks about Renegade's second project, *Magic Pockets*, while Steve Kelly outlines the thoughts behind the *Cadaver* levels disk. First, though, Tom Watson, an ex-Mirrorsoft man himself and the one responsible for the day-to-day running of Renegade, outlines how it all happened, why it had to happen, and where it goes from here.



***Gods*, the first Renegade release, and a sure-fire hit if ever we saw one. Typically gorgeous graphics, finely tuned platform gameplay and a hint of innovation in the artificial intelligence routines – 'We wanted to take the genre a stage further on,' says Eric.**

At the moment, to all intents and purposes, Tom Watson *is* Renegade. Sure, the publishing company has other directors – some of the Bitmaps and a couple of blokes from Rhythm King, the indie record label that owns much of the company – but no other employees as such. 'Maybe I'll get an assistant in a bit,' he says. 'That'd be nice.'

Not that he really seems to need one – over the six months or so since the outfit was officially announced, Tom has built up a pretty sizeable reputation for it, thank you very much. To a large extent that's down to the existing rep of The Bitmap Brothers, but it's also down the the intriguing nature of the idea. After all, here we all are in a young industry that's always drawing parallels between itself and the music business, and – what's this? – suddenly some bona fide music biz types are getting directly involved. What will they think of the way we work? How will they do things differently? It's both threatening and intriguing in almost equal measure.

They *are* doing things differently too, with the emphasis on creator's rights, original product and building up a loyalty to developers, rather than to a publishing outfit. There are problems with this of course, as many established software publishers would keenly point out. Not every programmer wants the high profile of the Bitmaps, for instance. And then there are original products, which can be a big risk – they take longer to do generally, and they may not get much of an audience when they come out. There are many great games – ones which everyone knows, and magazines rave about – which never really sold all that many copies at all. And then there's the question of the way time gets eaten up when you're in a self publishing-type venture – suddenly there's that much more to do, and your productivity rate goes way down.

But anyway, these are all points we'll tackle later on. First, what exactly is the story behind Renegade? How did it get started? How well is it working? And where will the industry itself be in a few year's time? Let's go over to the man himself...

So, to start off with – what's the big picture? How did it all begin?

Okay, the big picture. Two years

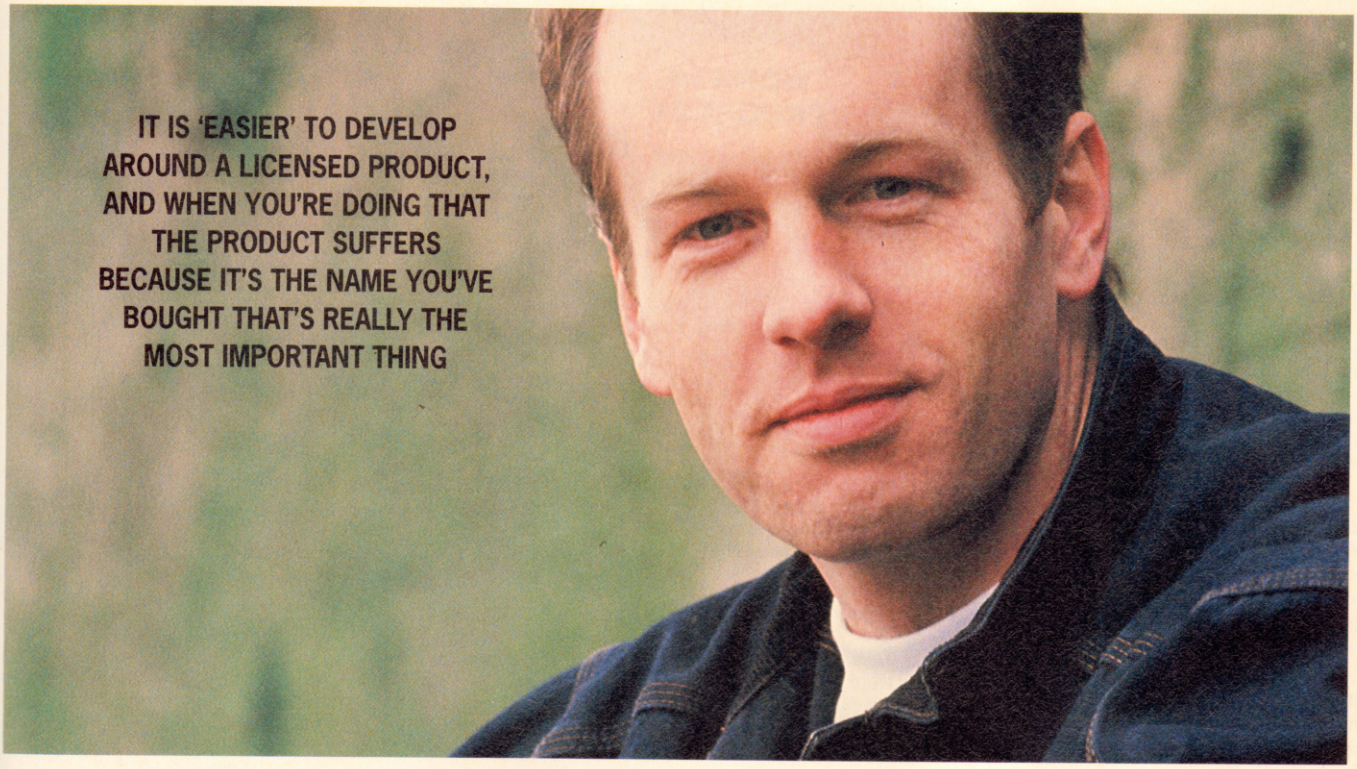


Photo Ian Watson

ago *Xenon 2* was being produced and everyone was talking about what sort of music should go with it. The Bitmaps were at Mirrorsoft then – they'd been there since Virgin (their original publisher) turned down *Speedball* and they'd had to look elsewhere.

That was a bit of a mistake on Virgin's part, wasn't it?

Yes, products they missed. I don't know exactly why they turned it down exactly, but obviously they'd thought it wasn't commercial enough, that it wouldn't work. It's difficult to say what was going through people's minds at the time.

So anyway, the Bitmaps took *Speedball* round a couple of places and it went to Mirrorsoft. That was a one product contract, but everybody was so happy with how it worked that a contract for three more products was drawn up, those three being *Xenon 2*, *Cadaver* and *Speedball 2*.

Which brings us back to *Xenon 2*, the first of them, and the problem with finding suitable music to go with it. Eric (Matthews, the Bitmap's main games designer) was listening to Into The Dragon by Bomb The Bass at the time, particularly the Assault On Precinct 13 thing, and thought it'd make a really good theme. He rang me up and asked if I thought we could get it.

You being where?

Me doing marketing at Mirrorsoft at the time. I found out a name at Rhythm King, the Bomb The Bass record company, and rang him up. The name was Martin Heath, and he just happened to be the guy who ran the company! It turned out he was a games nut – he's got about 500 games, some board games, some computer games – so this was like manna from heaven for him.

Had he already heard of the Bitmaps?

I don't think so actually, because he's more interested in strategy games. Anyway, he came round the next day going, 'Can I raid your stock cupboard, please please please?' We all got on well and as far as the music was concerned it was yeah, what a brilliant idea, let's do this. The thing about Rhythm King is that the style of music they work in is all ST driven, so new technology and computers aren't a problem for them.

So anyway, Tim (Simenon, of Bomb The Bass) helped Eric out – it was a creative process, not just a 'Can I have the rights to use that music?' sort of thing – and *Xenon 2* went out 18 months ago. Everyone was very happy with it, everyone agreed what a good idea it had been and said yes, we must do it again sometime.

And that was that?

For the time being, yes. Now at the same time, from my perspective, I was getting extremely pissed off with the value judgements being made in the software industry. What I was starting to suspect was that companies find original product difficult to produce, both in terms of the judgements they make when signing a product in the first place, and in terms of the creative values that run through its development. It is 'easier' to develop around a licenced product, and when you're doing that the product suffers because it's the name you've bought that's really the most important thing. I didn't like the move towards licensing that was going on at the time because a) it worked against trying to do the best they can and b) ultimately was reliant on the creativity of others. So you'd find a load of scripts going round, Schwarzenegger scripts and all this crap, and it was all just generally getting more and more depressing.

So at what point did you leave the company?

We came to a position at the PC show which was the launch of *Xenon 2* where I'd totally fallen out of love →

Not to be outdone in the photo opportunity stakes, the Renegade team climbed up onto a roof near Piccadilly Circus for this rather snazzy shot. From left to right, Dan Thompson of Rhythm King, Bitmap Brother Steve Kelly and Tom Watson. 'It was bloody cold up there,' apparently.

with the industry, so I quit and went to work for a small film production company and that was it, I'd managed to escape from software!

So I'm out, I'm in the film industry, and I'm working on a project that involved Virgin Vision and also involved Rhythm King, which was just neat and curious and fun. It was like 'Hi guys, haven't seen you in ages!' At the same time, or around the same time, a freelance journalist got a commission from Melody Maker to write a piece on music and technology, and there was a link there to *Xenon 2*. So Martin at Rhythm King thought, 'A-ha, I should get Eric in on this, it's not just my side, it's more him really'. So they did an interview together, and then they went to dinner and Martin quizzed Eric on how the software industry worked. He was quite shocked by some of the things he heard.

Such as?

Under-exploitation of a whole number of areas – developer's profiles, how we fail to build a sense of allegiance and familiarity with the game player, but also the way developers are treated commercially, their rewards, their funding and so on. Martin's one of these very lively, dynamic, get up and go people, and he said, hey, let's do something about this.

Lots of talks later, and we decided – I was in there at the same time – that something could be done. We made a triangle of people who knew each other and had worked together who could say let's do it the way it *should* be done. Myself from my side, the Bitmaps as developers, and Rhythm King as outsiders to the software industry saying I don't believe this, some of this crap.

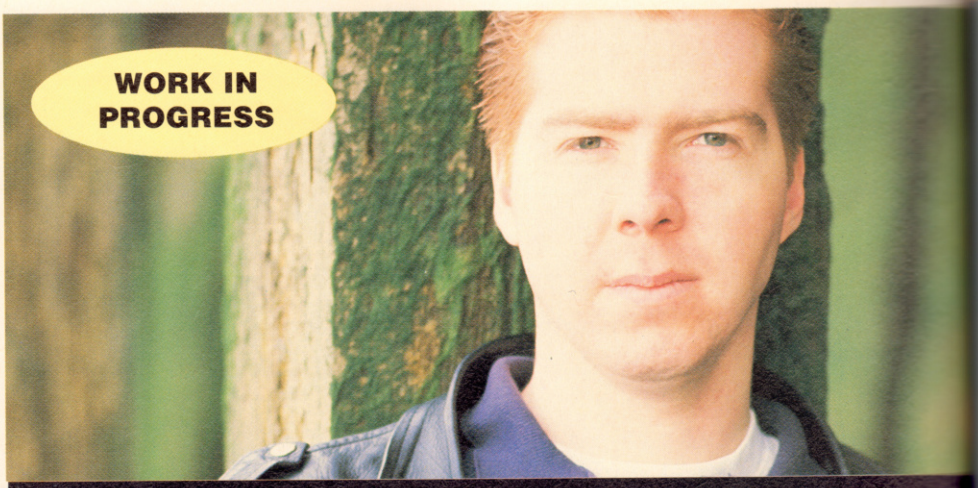
Effectively what we decided to do was recognise the fact that the key thing we have is our creativity and the products we can produce.

Just listen to the Japanese companies that you see wandering around people's corridors at the moment. Talk to them and they'll say, 'Look, what we're good at is marketing and management – those are our skills. Creatively were crap. You're good at creativity – let's do it together'. And as a broad rule of thumb that's true.

WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS GET THE BEST CREATIVE PEOPLE WE CAN AND CREATE FOR THEM THE BEST ENVIRONMENT POSSIBLE SO THEY'LL DO THEIR BEST WORK.

When you say there are Japanese people wandering around the corridors, whose corridors do you mean?

A-ha! That would be telling! The thing is, the Japanese are buying up intellectual property rights left, right and centre, in the music business, in films, and the same is, or will be, true of software. They produce the brown goods, the hardware, and for the brown goods to work they need to produce software to run on them, and in the broader sense software is films, software is music, and so on. They're the products that give the brown goods relevance and purpose, and since they're keen to control the whole thing, they're going to get increasingly involved in buying up bits of our industry too.



Sean Griffiths, the *Magic Pockets* programmer, down on the waterfront.

MAGIC POCKETS

Currently there are about ten in-house programmers and graphic artists who come under the umbrella label The Bitmap Brothers, working in three teams on three different projects at once. At the moment there's the bunch who've just polished off *Gods*, of course (see the review this issue), another team who're just starting work on a newie that'll remain a secret for some time yet, and then there's this lot, who're working on *Magic Pockets*. By 'this lot' what I actually mean is Sean Griffiths, in his first major project as a Bitmap (previously he'd done a few bits and pieces on *Cadaver*) and Mark Coleman, veteran Bitmap who was responsible for the graphics of games like *Xenon 2* and *Gods*.

So what, you may ask, is *Magic Pockets*? Well, you may have seen bits of already, most obviously on the Saturday morning kids' TV show Motormouth, where an early demo version has been used in their phone-in computer game slot. The thinking seems to be that having tackled shoot-'em-ups, sports sims (sort of) and arcade adventures, the next obvious game genre for the Bitmaps to take a crack at was the cutsie arcade platform game. And take a crack at it they have.

So what's the concept Sean?

Well, basically, it's about a kid who has bottomless pockets – there's a whole world inside them. What's happened is that he's popped his favourite toys into them and they've got lost in a magic kingdom that's in there somewhere – naturally he wants to get them back. At the start of the game you see him whisk a black hole out of his pockets, drop it on the floor, and then jump through it into the magic kingdom, where the game proper begins.

The first level seems to have that distinctly Bitmap metallic look.

Well, perhaps a bit, but that's not representative of the game as a whole. What you see here is the underground cave level which is the first one we've completed – in the finished game there'll also be a jungle world, a lake where you spend part of the time swimming underwater, and a snowy mountain world. There'll be quite a bit of variety there – and it won't all be metallic looking!

What about the weapons he uses? They seem to look like little whirlwinds.

That's because that's what they are! I have the feeling his pockets are like a sort of void, so they're full of swirling mist, dust, ice, and things like that, and it's these that he uses as his weapons. On the first level, for instance, he pulls these mini-whirlwinds out, which can be powered up to different sizes by holding down the fire button. You can use them as weapons, but also as a way to get about the screen.

That sounds a little like the rainbows in *Rainbow Islands*.

Well, yes, though they're not as controllable as the rainbows. The transport thing is very unpredictable. What happens is that when you get a large whirlwind you can actually get inside it, then let it throw you out, at which point you start bouncing around the screen. You kill everything you touch when you're like that, but you can never really be sure exactly where you're going to stop. Perhaps more useful is the way you can trap baddies inside the whirlwinds, which spits them out in the form of coins or sweets.

Which sounds even more like *Rainbow Islands*.

I'm a big fan of *Rainbow Islands* actually – there're just so many bits to it. There are all the wings and stuff later on that hardly anybody's really seen, and I've found that a bit of an inspiration – I've been trying to fit as many neat things into *Pockets*.That's why I've taken the secret rooms idea from things like that and *Super Mario Brothers*. I want this to be the sort of game where people keep discovering new things even after they've had it for quite a while.

So what other bits are you particularly proud of?

It's all little detail stuff really. For example, I've got a TV set in there which I quite like. When you come across it, it shrinks everything down to half scale for a couple of seconds, so you can see more of the map and get more of a bearing on where you are.

I also like the bats which appear at one point in the game – I took ages trying to make sure that they fly properly. Instead of just floating on the same level with their wings flapping (like most flying sprites do) I made sure that you can actually see that it's the flapping that's keeping them up, so they go up each time they beat their wings, then sink down a bit between flaps.

What state is *Magic Pockets* in at the moment?

All the game design and most of the game logic has been done, it's just a case of sorting out the specific levels, working out how the puzzle elements are going to fall and so on. On the forest level, for instance, I know that I'm going to change the weapon you use from whirlwinds to clouds. You've going to have to get your clouds to water seeds so large plants will grow Jack And The Beanstalk-style and lift you up to higher platforms. You're effectively building your own way around the map, though I'm not yet sure exactly what this will look like when it's executed.

Then there are all the extra bits to add – Richard Joseph, who does most of the Bitmaps' sound, has to complete his stuff yet, and Betty Boo, one of Rhythm King's acts, will be doing a special version of Doing The Do to go with the game.

What's your little character called?

He's the Bitmap Kid – he's got the Bitmap's shades, the street-wise look and everything.

Its a bit of a shame that Mirrorsoft's *Brat* has just appeared which, though quite a different game, uses an almost identical central character.

Ha ha ha. Yes, what a rip off, eh? We think it's slightly suspicious really – it has been suggested that Mirrorsoft saw or heard about *Magic Pockets* quite early on, and nabbed the character for their own game. Not that I'd suggest they'd do anything like that of course.

Before we finish can we just move onto another topic for a minute. Everyone's making these great claims about the deal with Renegade – how marvellous it is, this idea of the creative people behind a product having more overall control. It can't all be sweetness and light though, can it? From your perspective, what's the downside of it?

The only real downside to Renegade is that they haven't released a product yet! *Gods* is the first one, so to some extent it's all theoretical how well everything's going to work at the moment, but I'm very confident that it will. There really aren't many other places I'd be happy to work at right now. I'd really like to see a que of other development houses at Renegade's door.

Some neat bits from *Magic Pockets* – the bats with their flapping wings, our hero floating on a a balloon of bubble gum, and riding to safety on his bike (a waggling section, of all things!)

So where does that leave us?

That leaves us with the one thing we've really got to sell, which is creativity. The thing they haven't got. That's what matters now – it's not having, for instance, a strong, heavily staffed company which has excellent access to European distribution. Yes, that can be important in the short term, but when the Japanese get here we'll find that they can do that better.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that a large Japanese entertainment group decides to launch a world wide software activity. It's going to be bloody hard for even say, EA, to have any hope of competing, let alone any of the smaller companies, by comparison really small companies like Ocean.

So Renegade fits into all this where?

Renegade says, look, the creative process is our one selling point, it's the one thing we really have. What we have to do is get the best creative people we can and create for them the best environment possible so they'll do their best work. At the moment, most relationships between publisher and developer have become almost combatitive, which is an utter disaster as far as we can see. Neither side are happy, neither side are doing their best work, which is so sad because ultimately publishers and developers are working to the same ends, those of producing the best products they can and then selling a lot of them.

Photo: Ian Watson

WHAT RENEGADE HAVE OFFERED IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD PROFIT SHARE DEAL, NOT ANY FORM OF ROYALTY. SUDDENLY THERE'S ANOTHER TOTALLY DIFFERENT OPTION IN THERE FOR CREATIVE TEAMS AND OBVIOUSLY FOR SOME PUBLISHERS THAT'S WORRYING.

Do you think that to some extent that that mistrust and combatitiveness can be put down to a degree of unprofessionalism on the part of many developers? I mean in terms of working to time scales, doing what they're meant to be doing and so on.

Well, look at it like this – if you buy a dog and chain it to a post and kick it every morning it's going to bite your ankle! Unfortunately though, yes, I think that's a very strong part of it. Some developers can be extremely unprofessional. There have been cases of that recently in fact, but what you've got to remember is this basic principle that developer and publisher are working to the same ends and should recognise that fact from the outset.

Moving onto the immediate future for Renegade, it looks a bit at the moment like a sort of Bitmaps self-publishing venture. Do you see yourselves signing up any other programming teams? And if so, when and who?

Yes, we do. When? Within the next three years, when we meet a team who have the right products, the right backgrounds, the right attitudes and who are a free steal – in other words, are not tied up in any other situation. When we meet that team we'll do something with them.

In the last few months we've met one or two who may fit that bill. There are a few people who want to watch Renegade happen, want to see it work, and when it's obvious that we are doing what we're saying we'll do they'll make that step. It's odd you know, but we've got a very high profile at the moment without having actually sold anything. We have to turn the words into deeds and actions.

How do you find the industry has reacted to Renegade? You've come in here, you've stuck your necks out, you're bound to have raised a few heckles.

Hmm. One of the things is that in terms of the way software publishers work at present, everybody knows effectively what everyone else is doing in the way of deals – what publisher x is paying programmer y and so on. You have a balance where most publishers are in more or less the same position, with the same overheads and so on, so most developers will get more or less the same deal from all companies – your decision on who you go with comes down to a 'Where will I be happiest, who'll sell the most copies of my games?' sort of thing.

What Renegade have offered is a straightforward profit share deal, not any form of royalty. Suddenly you're not comparing like with like any more – there's another totally different option in there for creative teams and obviously for some publishers that's worrying. So people try and ridicule us and poo-poo us, saying we won't be around in a year's time and so on.

Look at it from our perspective though and you'll see that what we're doing isn't totally unique – there're representative aspects of the same thing happening in other industries too. There's the thing in comics with independent publishers, creators' rights and so on, there's the indie record labels in the music business and so on. It's an underlying trend.

Do you think you'll really change anything?

Broadly, if we're to succeed, the best criteria with which to judge it isn't how many developers we sign, but on how the relationship between developers and publishers sits in a few years' time. If you can →

look at the industry in two years and see things haven't changed then we haven't been successful. What we would like to see is the whole relationship between developers and publishers changing, which will help the longevity of the industry. Look for a shift in how people look at the concept of the publishing industry – creativity is the paramount skill, and should be recognised as such.

What do you think are the biggest problems facing Renegade over the next few years?

To be honest, I think we've been through them. The biggest problem was always getting started, getting Renegade to market if you like. We've not actually sold anything yet, we haven't had a product out, and no other publisher has been alive this long without actually releasing anything. Of course there'll be problems – day to day ones like a product going late, or a major bug appearing in one we've shipped out – but they're in the nature of the business, and sometimes you just can't help those.

There are bigger ones too, though. Will we be able to attract the developers we want to attract? Will we be able to take our products into foreign territories – and we're looking beyond Europe here – in the way that we would like? And will we be able to forge the links with artists in other fields – something we've already started – as we intend to?

These are all problems we've got to face, but the big one was always 'Will we actually be able to do it in the first place?' and, well, here we are. ■

IF WE'RE TO SUCCEED, THE BEST CRITERIA WITH WHICH TO JUDGE IT...IS HOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPERS AND PUBLISHERS SITS IN A FEW YEARS' TIME.

The *Cadaver* team. From left to right: Dan Malone (the graphic artist), Mike Montgomery, Phil Wilcox (the puzzle designer) and Steve Kelly.

CADAVER LEVELS DISK

Steve Kelly is one of the 'real' Bitmap Brothers, the three who're directors of the firm and who should be familiar from oodles of publicity shots (some of which grace these very pages). Recently he's been working on a disk of extra levels for the popular *Cadaver*, an isometric 3D arcade adventure in the style of old 8-bit games like *Head Over Heels*, *Knight Lore*, *Sweevo's World* and so on.

First off, why did you do a game like *Cadaver*? It seems like quite a 'quiet' choice after the likes of *Xenon* and *Speedball*.

The reason we did *Cadaver* was simply that I've always wanted to do an adventure. We started it almost for fun and it simply grew out of all proportion. I wanted to do one in the style of the old Ultimate games like *Knight Lore* because, unless you're very good with vector graphics, it's the system that allows you to interact with objects the best. You can go behind things and so on.

We started up by writing a simple 3D map maker to produce a game not unlike the old 8-bit ones, but what we ended up with was a full blown game creator. We called it Adventure Creation Language, and it ended up remarkably flexible and easy to use. After putting all that effort into it we couldn't really leave it at that – we had to use it again, and that's where the levels disk comes in.

Is this ACL something that can be used without any real programming experience?

Very much so. In fact the bloke who designed most of the puzzles can't program at all, but he used it quite easily. In theory we could keep on producing new levels disks with the ACL for as long as people want to play them. This new one we've done will, I think, prove to be a lot better than the original, mainly because we've only just learned how powerful the language we've created really is.

It all looks very similar to the first *Cadaver*.

Well it is, it's an extension of the first game. If you look at it carefully though I think you'll see that the graphics are a lot better – making 3D isometric stuff really work is hard, and I think we've got better at it. The puzzles are better too, in that they're more logical and well-rounded.

Besides the new puzzles we've introduced quite a lot of new objects to the game, and also a little side-kick character, which we've nicknamed the Snot. He'll collect gold and so on for you from places you couldn't otherwise get to, and being a good little monster he'll sacrifice his life for you if need be.

How well did *Cadaver* do sales-wise? I don't get the impression that it was as successful as some of your other products.

In the UK it wasn't as successful as *Xenon 2*, *Speedball* and so on, true, but overall it did really well – it was our first major success abroad. The Germans particularly liked it, probably because they like good value for money from a game. Personally it's my favourite of the things we've done, not just because this is my sort of game, but because my programming's got better, and I think that shows. Mike (Montgomery, one of the other original Bitmaps) likes it best too I think – or at least, he did until *Gods* came along, of course!

Speaking of 'the next one', how do you feel about doing sequels? The Bitmap Brothers are always going on about the importance of original products. Don't you feel that doing the same thing again is a bit of a waste of time and that you'd rather move on?

Well, in the case of the levels disk, that was part of the plan from the outset. We knew we could get more out of the Adventure Creation Language, so we knew we'd want to use it again. Levels disks don't take much time to do anyway.

In general though, yes, we do sequels, but we don't get the same creative team to do what's effectively the same thing again. We get new blood in for those, while the old guys go on to something else. That's what happened with *Xenon 2*, where The Assembly Line did the code to our design, and with *Speedball 2*.

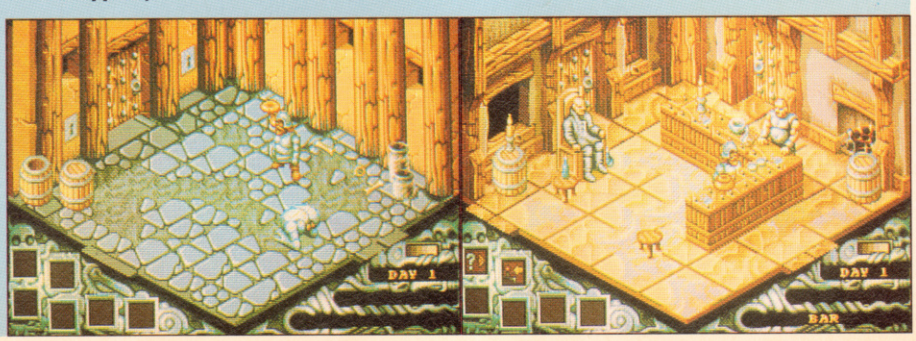
It's possible there'll be a full-blown *Cadaver 2* at some point, but since the first took a year and three quarters we need a breather before we get into another one. We'd want to make it quite a different game though to make it worthwhile – one idea we had was to change all the graphics and make it into a science fiction adventure, another that I quite liked had a Victorian London, Jack The Ripper theme. Whether we'll have the enthusiasm to do it is another matter though.

How about the accusation that the Bitmaps just soup up old game ideas, and haven't actually come up with anything that's all that original of their own yet?

Well, I must admit that when I look at a game like *Lemmings* I think, Christ, I would have loved to have written that. The problem is that it's much more of a risk doing something as different as that – a lot of companies have floundered by running with something that might be very original but just isn't going to sell.

Looking back at games I wish I'd done, well, there's *Dungeon Master* of course – the classic – but there are plenty of others too. There's an old arcade game called *Qix* which I like, and one I love at the moment is a coin-op called *Ramparts* from Atari. It's like a little war where you're watching from above and controlling one side. It's just phenomenal.

Some rooms from the new *Cadaver* levels disk – updated graphics, new objects and lots of new puzzles. (Unfortunately the Snot *doesn't* appear).



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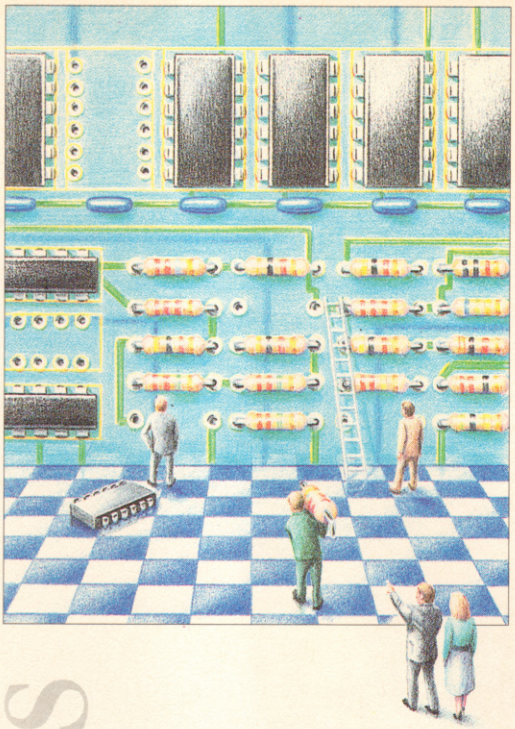

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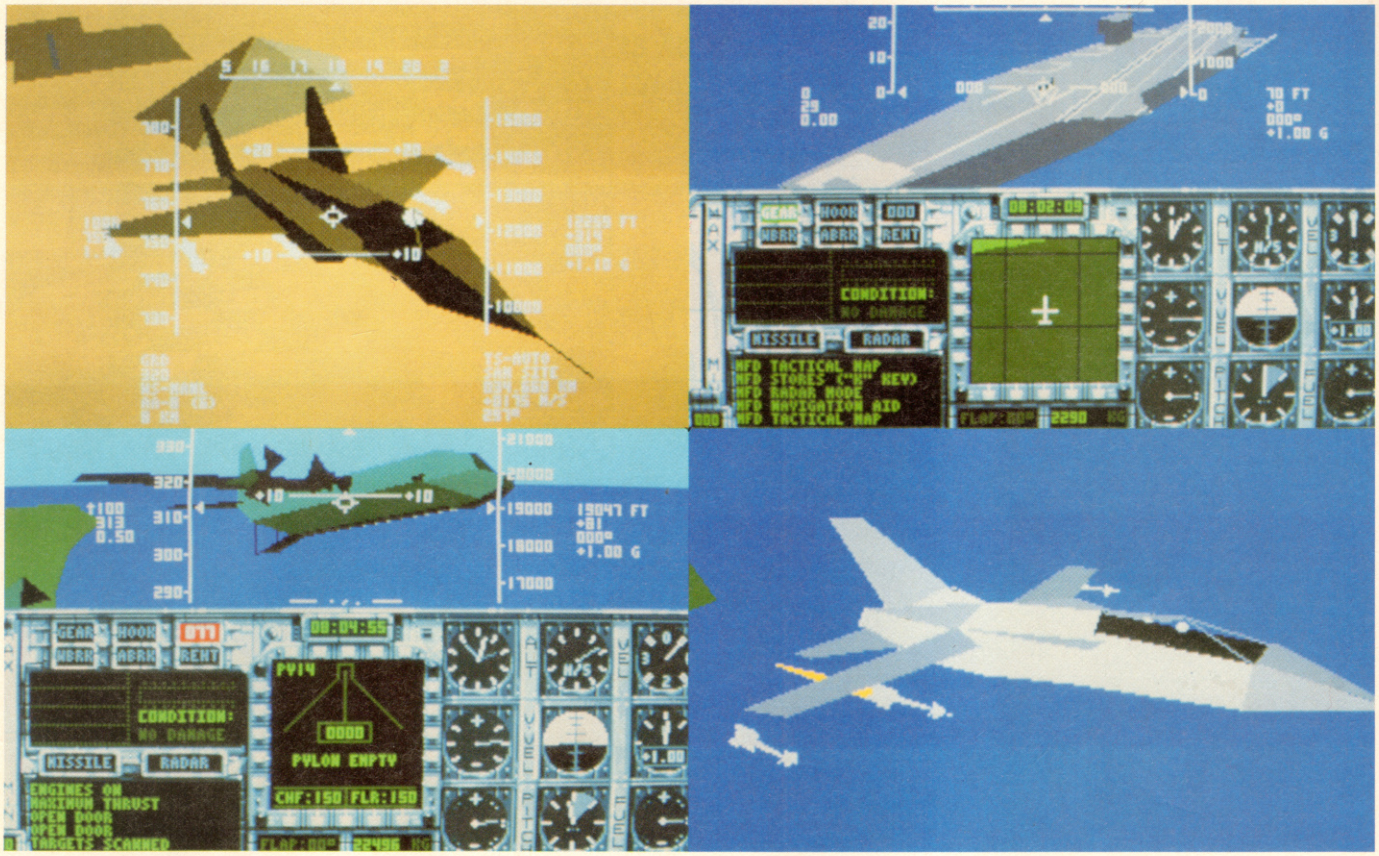
BIRDS OF PREY PROGRAMMER CHRIS HUMPHRIES



BIRDS OF PREY

Thirty-five thousand and sixty-four hours. One thousand four hundred and sixty-one days. One twenty-fifth of a century. Whichever way you look at it that's four years. And with a week in politics considered a long time, what's four years between friends in programming terms? The answer is Electronic Arts' *Birds Of Prey*.

There can be few computer programs which have taken longer to produce than this one. Sure, people have had ideas which have taken years to reach fruition, and it's not unusual for products to take a year or so to come together, but four years of active development?

'It's basically an attempt to improve on all the previous flight simulations,' reveals programmer Chris Humphries. 'I'm not saying we've succeeded – it would be arrogant to say that *Birds Of Prey* is the best. But certainly when it comes to the choice of aircraft and the choice of missions, it's superior.'

AS IS THE CASE with every Argonaut project to date, the whole team has been involved with the production of *Birds Of Prey*. Programmer Chris Humphries, for example, was responsible for putting together the detailed flight dynamics of the planes and the general *Birds Of Prey* environment. The slightly less intensive, but equally important, task of incorporating complex mathematics and honing the program's 3D routines was handled by Peter Warnes, while Ian Crowther brought up the rear with all-round programming support.

Almost all of the forty not-so-plain plane shapes were the handiwork of Danny Emmett. 'We've included most modern combat aircraft that are in service, plus a few optional extras like the 747 and the X-15,' says Chris Humphries, the man who gathered all the relevant details for the planes' flight dynamics. 'Basically, for every Western type of aircraft there's a Russian equivalent – such as the A-10 and the Su-25, and the F-16 and the MiG-29 – though because the West has been more prolific in producing aircraft there are more on one side than the other.'

'We've also had help from some nice friends in informative places who are involved in the real world of military flight simulations,' reveals Argonaut boss Jeremy San. 'They've given us comments and feedback and we know that *Birds Of Prey* is the most realistic flight simulation to be done on a microcomputer. It's taken years because it's something you can't do it quickly. Only recently has it been at a level where people have said it feels good. We can fly it now.'

Birds Of Prey was, until very recently, known as *Hawk*. According to Argonaut, the name change is testimony to the unexpected immensity of the project.

'The *Birds Of Prey* code actually started off as *Starglider* code,' reveals Jeremy. 'That's became *Starglider 2* code and then developed yet again into the *Birds Of Prey* code. Obviously *Birds Of Prey* is

'INFORMATION ON THE RUSSIAN ONES WAS DIFFICULT TO ACQUIRE – THEY'RE VERY SECRETIVE ABOUT THEIR EQUIPMENT.'

We all know that the Sky at night wouldn't be the same without Patrick and that in 1966 England won the World Cup with Bobby. Now we have a flight simulation with more. More planes to fly. More realism. More attention to detail. And – here's a surprise – more development time. Gary Penn met with its creators at Argonaut Software for a bird's eye view.

The F-117A in flight in *Birds Of Prey*. 'It's called the Wobbly Goblin,' Jeremy reveals, 'because it's so unstable it needs computers to keep it flying straight forward the whole time.

'Most of the information about the Stealth came from magazines and TV footage, and measuring up magazine pictures for wing spans and so on. You have to make some assumptions – we'll never know for sure until the information's declassified. The original pictures the US released were taken from a very strange angle and it didn't give us much of an idea as to the exact dimensions of the wingspan and how slender it actually is – it looked very stubby in the picture, so we did a shape and did the flight model for that. And as more and more pictures were released we refined the model. 'We have a video which gave us an insight into how the Stealth was designed, which was quite funny. It was designed quite a long time ago when computing power couldn't cope with curves. They knew how to make an aircraft stealthy but they didn't know how to make it fly. So they simplified the shapes that were involved and built the aircraft out of polygons so their computers could cope with it and try to predict how it would fly.' According to Jeremy, the super-secret F-22 and F-23 will be 'the ultimate Stealth Fighters because they'll be stealthy *and* manoeuvrable. We've got a few seconds of footage of it. It looks quite interesting actually.'

vastly different from those – probably every bit of code has been rewritten in the process.

'If we'd wanted a shoot 'em up then the *Starglider* code would have been fine – we'd have simply turned the spaceships into planes. But that's not what *Birds Of Prey* is.'

One thing *Birds Of Prey* is though is big. For a start, there are 40 different planes to fly, each one built from the finest home computer flight model that time and money can buy. And it's not only the planes which appear in quantity – there's a suitable range of weaponry available too, encompassing around 30 missiles and bombs.

'We included any air-to-air missiles we could think of,' says Chris. 'Information on the Russian ones was difficult to acquire – they're very secretive about their equipment. Every missile looks and behaves like the real thing. Fortunately, the flight model for the missiles isn't as complex as those for the planes.'

But as Argonaut is quick – and glad for that matter – to point out, the quantity of planes and associated hardware is merely one of many features which make up the definitive flight simulation. Take the way the planes actually fly for example...

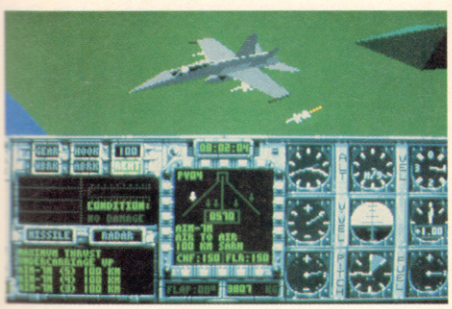
'With most flight simulations on microcomputers the programmers have programmed the effects rather than the cause of the flight,' observes Jeremy. 'You move the mouse and the plane will turn on everyone else's program. In our one you move the mouse and the ailerons or flaps or rudder will move and with the plane flying through the air it hits those control surfaces and they cause it to turn. We've modelled it realistically, which means we have much more accurate flight dynamics.'

The subject of accuracy is something that's prone to stick in Argonaut's collective craw. 'I find it strange that people claim to have produced the most realistic flight simulation ever,' says Chris. 'I know for a fact from my research that it's not possible to get one hundred per cent realism even if you're concentrating on doing a simulation of just, say, an F-16. The data for the realistic behaviour of the aircraft is not available to the general public, and would never be given.'

And then there are the missions...

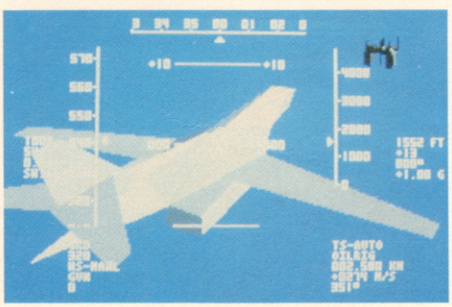
'One of the things we didn't like about other flight simulators that have missions is that they were all very specific and once you'd solved them that was that. We wanted mission genres so that you select the kind of mission you want and it will generates something different for you each time.

'I'm not saying that having fixed missions is bad – it's good in a way because it means you can concentrate on designing that one mission to be really



Can you name the plane this cockpit belongs to? Probably not, for despite the quantity of planes in *Birds Of Prey* only a single, generic cockpit is used. 'It's there really for people who like cockpits,' explains Chris. 'We made a conscious decision not to do forty cockpits – just the code to update them would be phenomenal, and whenever you want to add a new feature to the aircraft you have to do that forty times.

'It does look an awful lot like an F-18 at a glance. But it could just as easily be an F-20...'



Quite unsurprisingly *Birds Of Prey* looks nicest when an external view is employed. The outside world can be viewed from pretty much any angle – and from the point of view of any object – with a full pan and zoom facility. There's a high level of attention to detail in *Birds Of Prey*, as well there might be considering that everything's had three to four years of work put into it. Not only can you see the missiles on the planes' wings, you can watch them drop off, flare up and jet off when launched.

'EVEN THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT ACTUALLY COME OUT OF HANGARS AND TAXI DOWN THE RUNWAY'

well thought out. But rather than do that for *Birds Of Prey*, which would be like copying everybody else, it naturally evolved this way.

'The idea is you can take off and do what you want or you can concentrate on knocking out the enemy defences, winning the war if you like – knocking out runways, destroying factories, destroying their ability to produce aircraft and that kind of thing. If you were ordered to hit a target you'd get more points than if you randomly hit a target.'

IN BIRDS OF PREY there are 12 mission types to choose from. These range from air interception to long-range bombing of enemy installations, including their airbases, runways and equipment-producing factories. The level of difficulty within the mission type is determined by the quality of the enemy you encounter, such as aircraft and SAM sites.

But the most important aspect of *Birds Of Prey*'s mission structure is, according to Jeremy, the fact that it all takes place in an interactive environment: 'It's a world out there and it's continuing and it's functioning and the enemy are making sensible decisions the whole time and are reacting to what you're doing. Even the enemy aircraft actually come out of hangars and taxi down the runway. That's something I hate about other games of this genre – you're flying along and suddenly there's an enemy plane in front of you. It didn't take off from anywhere.'

Rather than attempt to – Ching! Ching! Ching! – cash in on any particular conflict – say, the recent Gulf War – Argonaut made a conscious decision to make the *Birds Of Prey* environment a fictitious one.

'These things tend to date a product,' says Chris. 'Being fictional means theoretically it won't date in the same way. And people do die in these situations, so that could be seen as tasteless. It's basically a straight fight between two fictitious sides. They do have a definite split in that one side has Russian aircraft and the other side has European and American aircraft.'

But what about down-sides? There must be some, surely? Well, yes. For a start, all this luxury comes at a cost to owners of unexpanded A500s, to the extent that they simply can't have it. To run *Birds Of Prey* you need at least one megabyte. Chris reckons that 'it would be very difficult to cut it down to fit into a half a megabyte machine because everything in it's essential.'

What you can't glean from these screens is Giles Goddard's sounds. Apart from the roar of the engines being louder outside the plane than in, the noise cuts out altogether when you fly high enough.

The only other downside is to do with the small matter of running speed. On this point Chris feels that honesty is the best policy: '*Birds Of Prey* is perhaps not as fast as some of its competitors, but most of the time it's acceptable. No-one's complained about the frame rate yet.'

This strikes a raw nerve with Richard Clucas (the project manager) though: 'It's difficult to actually compare the speeds of simulations because they all do different things. So *F-29* goes really fast but in *F-29* I'm on top of a building before I can see it. *Birds Of Prey* does not go as fast as *F-29* but you can see the buildings before you hit them. What we've been finding is that the only people obsessed with frame rates are journalists and programmers. Programmers like to say "mine's bigger than yours" sort of thing.'

'What we've done is use an idea from the PC market by having levels of detail,' explains Jeremy. 'You can have high level of detail and a slower frame rate or a low level of detail and a faster frame rate. Every single graphic feature has an option to turn it off an on. Well, within reason – you can't turn the aircraft off obviously.'

'Most people who have played *Birds Of Prey* just love playing it,' concludes Richard. 'It really is a case of "What's frame rate?" ' ■

Argonaut: Richard Clucas at the computer, Jez San behind, Chris Humphries in the tie and, erm, another one.

MEET THE ARGONAUTS

It was over eight years ago that a lone Jeremy San formed the legendary (and that even in legendary circles) Argonaut Software. Nowadays he's in good company with a development team numbering twenty strong. Young Jeremy's first commercial release was a simplistic shoot-'em-up called *Skyline Attack* for the Commodore 64. But it was the arrival of *Starglider* two years later that put the Argonaut name on the map. *Starglider* was one of the first releases for the 16-bit machines, and Jeremy makes no bones about the fact that it did extremely well for him and his company.

The award-winning sequel made its mark in 1987 and shortly after that came the rather weak conversions of *Afterburner* for Activision – which Jeremy's not too keen to talk about...

'The less said about that the better. It was simply for the money. We tend to put a large amount of research and development into our product, more than most people, and that costs a fortune. Consequently we have to do work which is not necessarily what we want to do just to keep the company running and keep the money coming in. *Birds Of Prey* is probably the longest project we've ever heard about. I don't know we can afford to ever spend that long on a game again. It was quite a drain on the company.'

In fact, Mr San is remaining tight-lipped about future projects. All he will say is that the next one isn't based on the *Birds Of Prey* code, which means it won't be a polygon-based three dimensional affair. The reason for this becomes clear when Jeremy talks about the past, present and future use of this particular display technique...

'Basically we carved out a niché which other people have now followed. We have a large investment in the 3D technology in that a lot of people have been programming it and refining it, so it makes financial sense to continue doing that type of product. We won't exclusively do polygon games but they seem to be our forte and while there's demand for them we'll continue doing them. Now though we're concentrating purely on gameplay and not 3D graphics.

'The problem at the moment with the performance of the crop of current machines is that no matter how good a programmer you are, no matter how brilliant your 3D routines, there is a limit to how fast they go. That limit is governed by the machine, and no-one can argue any different. We used to pride ourselves on having the fastest frame rate in the West, but it's pointless doing that. We've grown up now. There's a lot more to life than frame rate.'

'BIRDS OF PREY IS PROBABLY THE LONGEST PROJECT WE'VE EVER HEARD ABOUT.'

FOUR THINGS YOU COULD DO IN FOUR YEARS (If you weren't spending all your time working on *Birds Of Prey*)

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2) You could have six babies – that's assuming you really went for it and the little blighters were premature by a month each, and that's not impossible really.

3) You could have sweated almost 274 gallons of fluid, or excreted around 600 gallons of urine. Or even shed around 45 pounds of skin.

4) Or... (Snip! – Ed)

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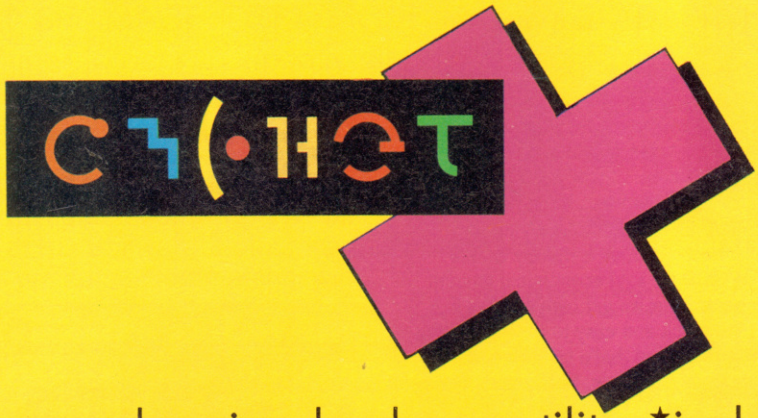

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GAME REVIEWS

This second review section isn't meant to be seen as a sort of slightly embarassing poor cousin to the big one at the front, and the games in it certainly aren't all crap. Indeed, you'll find there's no shortage of high scorers in here.

No, the criteria by which we chose what appears where tends to vary – basically if we think a game is particularly brilliant, or (even if not brilliant) particularly interesting and deserving of a fair bit of discussion we'll give it a lot of space up at the front. If, on the other hand, we think something is only likely to be bought by a limited number of people, or breaks little new ground, or is merely simple enough to easily explain in a more (shall we say) economical amount of space then it goes here at the back. Thus we get high scorers like *Gem-X* (pretty, bags of fun, but dead quick and easy to explain) sitting cheek-by-jowl with utter rubbish like... Ah, but that'd be telling, and you'll find out soon enough over the next 13 pages. Yes, you're damn right, it'll be unlucky for some...

FULL PRICE

82 *Atomino* Psygnosis
84 *Back To The Future Part 3* Image Works
91 *The Bard's Tale III* EA
80 *Brat* Image Works
92 *Chuck Yeager's Advance Flight Trainer 2.0* EA
86 *The Crystals Of Arborea* Silmarils
84 *Das Boot* Mindscape
86 *Demoniak* Palace
84 *The Famous Five* Enigma Variations
87 *Gem-X* Demonware
90 *International Ice Hockey* Impulze
81 *Metal Masters* Infogrames
81 *Moonshine Racers* Millennium
83 *'Nam* Domark
89 *The Power* Demonware
83 *Quadrel* Loriciel
82 *Ski Or Die* EA
82 *Skull'n'Crossbones* Domark
86 *The Spirit Of Excalibur* Virgin
90 *Supercars 2* Gremlin
91 *Super Monaco GP* US Gold
92 *Viz* Virgin
91 *Warlock-The Avenger* Millennium

BUDGET

95 *Blazing Thunder* Hi-Tec
95 *Carrier Command* Mirror Image
95 *CJ's Elephant Antics* Code Masters
96 *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge* The Hit Squad
95 *Forgotten Worlds* Kixx
96 *Operation Thunderbolt* The Hit Squad
96 *Rocket Ranger* Mirror Image
95 *Speedball* Mirror Image
96 *Strike Force Harrier* Mirror Image
95 *3D Pool* Mirror Image

SCORES (AND HOW THEY WORK)

They're a simplified version of The Bottom Lines you encountered earlier in the mag – no Uppers or Downers this time (there isn't the room), just a nice juicy summing up sentence and a score. (That's all you really need anyway). If one of us violently disagrees with the mark the main reviewer goes for we'll make amends with a little *On The Other Hand...* box somewhere nearby. That's it, now on with the show...

Part *Lemmings*, part Roger Rabbit, the cartoon va

BRAT

Publisher	**Image Works**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Foursfield**
Release Date	**Out now**

You know, the software industry isn't the big, friendly, cuddly, happy family that you might think it is. Sometimes it just gets *so* bitchy it'd make you want to curl up into a little ball and go and hide behind the fridge, recoiling in horror like someone who'd just tried to plug a fluffy little kitten into an electrical socket for a joke and had it go BLAM! all over their brand new suede jacket. Such is the case with *Brat*, a new game from Image Works. It isn't a coin-op conversion, it isn't a movie licence, it's a completely original arcade puzzley thing with a lovably nasty sweet little baby as its hero. So why does everybody hate it as if it was personally responsible for the death of their favourite auntie? Well, on the one side it's been suggested that the character may have been, ahem, 'borrowed' from the Bitmap Brothers' forthcoming *Magic Pockets* , while on the other side the gameplay looks like it's been, erm, 'heavily influenced' by *Lemmings* for a start. Somebody around here even slated it as a semi-copy of *Spindizzy*! I don't know, you'd think no-one had ever been inspired by anything before.

So, enough of all this nonsense, I think it's time this game was reviewed on its own merits.

It's a pretty little thing, this *Brat* – cartoony graphics scroll smoothly at a gentle pace up the screen, accompanied by happily twittering music. The game itself is a major-league toughy, a real case of

Part of the intro – *Brat* climbs out of his cot, dresses up and immediately becomes totally, well, *horrid*...

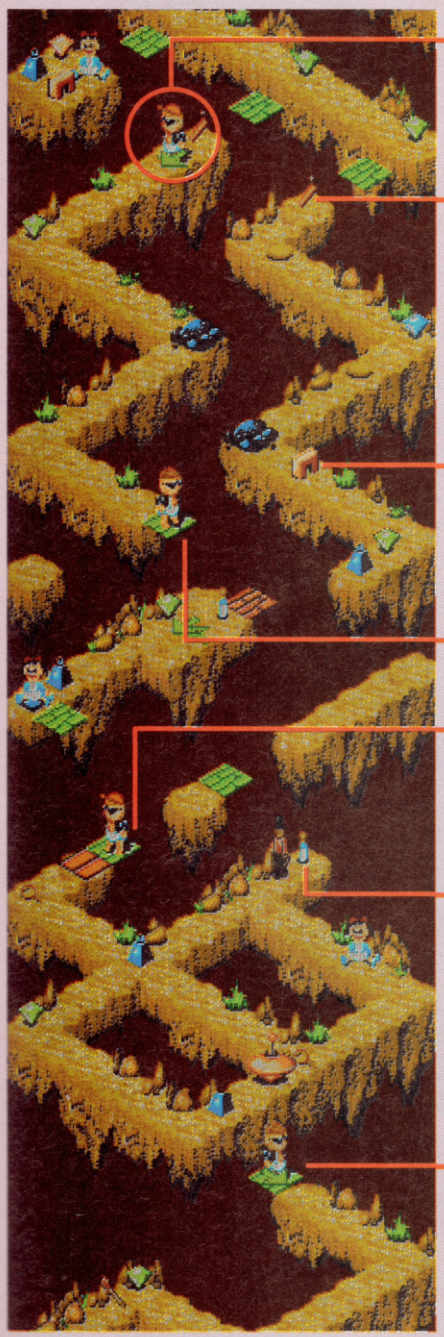
Brat meets the a magic roundabout. (There's no denying the cuteness of this game).

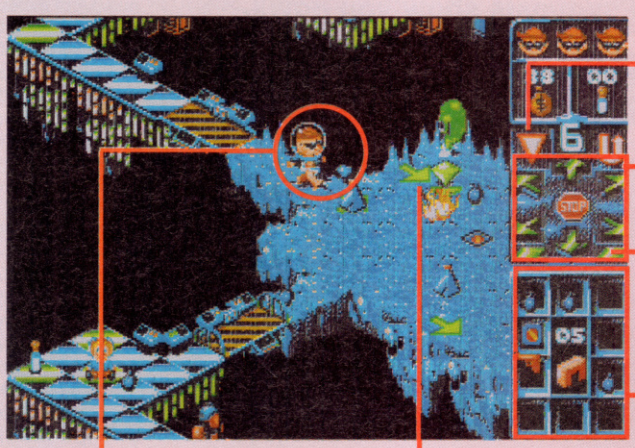
METAL MASTERS

Publisher	**Infogrames**
Price	**£25.99**
Programmer	**Tuam Docao**
Release Date	**Out now**

Oh dear. The idea of this all sounded quite promising, in a 2000AD-ish sort of a way. We're in the future, right, and, well, to quote the booklet that comes with it 'The metal giants, masterpieces of high technology, implacable and indestructible, fight without respite on tracks of fire or under arches of steel! Always bigger, always stronger, the *Metal Masters* knows no limits! Will you be up to it?' Yes, as you might have guessed, this is a French game, and as such comes complete with our old friend, the dodgy bit of translation. Not knowing quite what to expect then, I booted it up. First came a rather nice picture of a giant robot, with a few little people standing around welding and making repairs. Then came a copy protection code screen (which seemed to crop up with monotonous regularity

...vasion continues, with the arrival of Mirrorsoft's new baby, *Brat*.





learning from experience coupled with a fine mix of forward planning and lightning reactions being the only way forward. At the same time though it's highly playable and easy to get the hang of when you first pick it up. It's beginning to sound like all those whinges were little more than sour grapes, eh readers?

So why don't I like it very much? Well, I'll tell you why. ('Thanks' - reader's voice). I don't like babies at the best of times, but Nathan (the *Brat* of the title) is the most nauseating little git I've ever come across in twelve years of video gaming. With his nappy, his leather jacket, his ridiculous shades and his baseball cap on sideways he looks like a grown-up member of EMF, but without the saving grace of some serviceably groovy teenpop to back him up. And curiously enough, the words 'back' and 'up' (as in 'gets my') also figure heavily in the effect that our 'hero' has on me. The second-rate Bart Simpson clone that is Nathan irritated me so much that all I wanted to do was see him die, and since getting him killed isn't a hard thing to do, the game's lasting appeal clocks in at a number of seconds. In all fairness, this is a pretty good game in itself, but unless you're a lot more tolerant of precocious toddlers than I am (and that's a big zero on the tolerant-o-meter, statistic fans), it's going to be more than you can stomach.It's certainly not the remarkable bit of game creating many people seem to be making it out to be – flawed, and heavily overladdenwith features to try and make up for it.■ ***Stuart Campbell***

ON THE OTHER HAND...

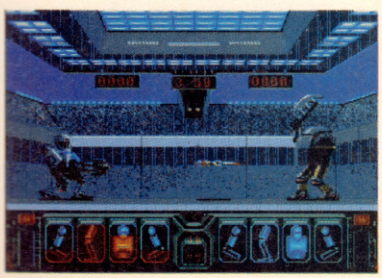
I'm afraid to say I think Stuart's being a bit irritable about this. Nathan isn't *that* horrible, and far from *Lemmings* or *Pockets* what this really reminds me of is those short Roger Rabbit cartoons, where Roger's always desperately running ahead to save an odious little kid from plunging headlong into a boiling saucepan or something. You may find the indirect control a little distancing, but I found it neat and well implemented.

84 percent. – Matt Bielby

THE BOTTOM LINE

Beautifully programmed and with lovely sound and graphics, *Brat* is utterly ruined by a colossal misjudgement of character. If you can identify with Nathan, you're not the kind of person I'd want to meet down the pub on a Saturday night. In fact, I don't even think you should be allowed on the streets.

65 PERCENT



Pretty graphics, yes – you really have to see *Metal Masters* move to realise how dull it is.

throughout the game) followed by a bit of a wait and then...what's this ? Surely it can't be..? Yes it is – a ropey old single screen beat-'em-up, in this day and age! And at this price! It's a scandal.

It's particularly nightmarish when you see quite how useless this is. The graphics are reasonably pretty I suppose (though nothing to write home about), but underneath lurks, well, lurks nothing. The controls are very limited, what your robot does on screen seems to bear very little resemblance to any joystick instructions you might give it, and the monotonous action just plods on. And on. I've always hated beat-'em-ups anyway – they're just so boring – but if I had to justify my loathing to anyone, I couldn't do much better than simply sit them down for a few minutes with a copy of this.

The occasional neat touch – such as the little train that chugs on screen to pull away damaged robots – and the ability to build your own *Metal Master* to take part in the competitions do little to liven it up. No this is a clunker alright, and would be hard pushed to scrape a decent mark at £9.99, let alone at this price point. Bin it and then, just to make sure, bin the bin. ■

Matt Bielby

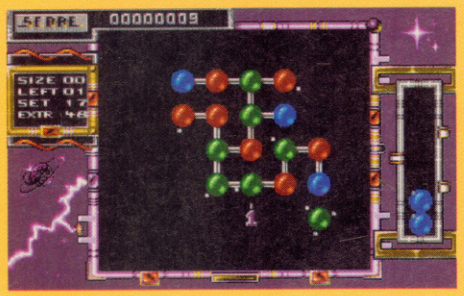
THE BOTTOM LINE

Hopelessly limited, old fashioned and repetitive robot beat-'em-up, lacking even the weird, off-the-wall qualities that have made so many French games such a hoot in the past.

42 PERCENT

Chemistry lessons *can* be fun. Don't believe it? Then let Psygnosis show you how...

ATOMINO



Covalent bonding: a sexy sort of subject matter, isn't it?

Publisher	**Pysgnosis**
Price	**£25.99**
Programmer(s)	**Blue Byte**
Release Date	**Out now**

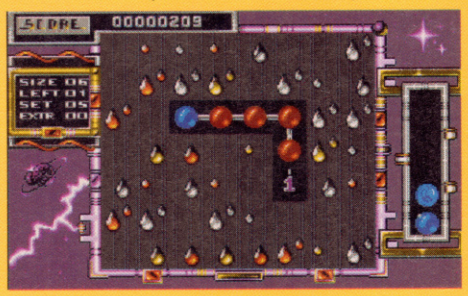
You'd think by now that programmers would be running out of strange and abstract ideas for puzzle games. *Tetris*, *Pipe Mania*, *E-Motion*, *Plotting*, *Puzznic*, *Gem-X*, all of them pretty fab and all of them completely odd. But no, there's something that no-one's tried yet. No-one's written a game about covalent bonding. Well, until now, that is...

Amiga Power World Of Chemistry, Part One in a series of, er, one, I should think: Covalent Bonding - the principle by which atomic molecules are formed, governed by the number of free electrons in any given atom. Hence, an atom with a single free electron can form a single bond with any other atom, an atom with two free electrons can form two bonds, and so on. And that's the underlying principle behind *Atomino*.

Atoms appear at random in a tube on screen, and have to be placed into the play area. Each atom has a certain number of free electrons – you have to place them adjacent to each other so bonds are created and molecules formed. When a molecule has no free electrons left over it disappears, and when a set number of complete molecules are formed the level is cleared. Later levels introduce obstacles onto the screen which have to be built around, specific atoms which have to be removed, and lower limits on the size of molecules which must be created, as well as increasing the number of molecules required for completion and the speed at which atoms appear. When your tube fills with atoms you can't do anything with, it's Game Over time. (Don't worry if you didn't understand a word of that, it's very easy to pick up in practice). So that's what you've got to do. The question is, how much will you enjoy doing it?

The answer is, of course, 'I don't know'. Do I look psychic? What I can tell you is that it didn't really grab me personally, but it's kind of difficult to say why. It's very slick, it's novel, and it's tough, but it just doesn't have that elusive magic something that makes a puzzle game great. Call it character, but I just didn't feel any desire to keep playing it after I'd finished a game. It shares a certain amount of feel with *Pipe Mania*, which I didn't like either, so if you were a fan of that game this could well be your kind of thing.

Don't take my word for it, see it for yourself, but I can't in all honesty recommend this as a good way to spend £25.■ *Stuart Campbell*



One of the easier screen in *Atomino* - simply fill the space with atoms to complete the molecule.

Our intrepid player struggles with the lattice structure in the main game grid, while another atom falls into the slot on the right, just itching to be used in the making of a molecule.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Interesting and different, but not really very compulsive, and at the end of the day compulsiveness is the main criterion for puzzle games. Buy *Gem-X* first, then think about *Atomino*...

66 PERCENT

ON THE OTHER HAND...

I reckon *Atomino does* have that elusive magic something that makes it great (and it doesn't rely on move retraction like other puzzlers I could mention). Actually, if comparisons to *Gem-X* are in order, then I'd like to point out that *Atomino* has thousands of levels compared to *Gem-X*'s measly few hundred. That said, the two are quite different styles of puzzler, and I happen to like both – only *Atomino* more so. Still, Stuart's wrong, I'm right, and that's all there is to it. *Atomino*'s an 85 percent-er if ever there was one.

85 percent. – Gary Penn

SKI OR DIE

Publisher	**Electronic Arts**
Price	**£25.99**
Programmer(s)	**Mike Abbot, Nana Chambers, Michael Kosaka**
Release Date	**Out now**

'Snow sports ain't for powder puffs' warns the instruction sheet for *Ski Or Die*. And judging by my failure to be good at any of its five events (or chat away in the appropriately Californian drone which rather sets the tone for its surf-culture frolics) I'm in no position to argue.

This is Rodney, your host for the fun and frolics of *Ski Or Die*.

The events are a collection of weirdo alpine activities, which you get to play as practice rounds or competitions. My personal fave was the Snowboard Half-Pipe. This is a skateboarding hybrid which sees you shooting left and right down an open-top ice tube. You can high jump, front V, hand plant, double twist and 360° back scratch over as many moguls and 'lips' as your merry little ski-board will carry you. It's all far too funky, but from then on events speed downhill at an alarming rate of knots. (Ho Ho.)

Not that the other competitions aren't endearing. They just haven't the same hook. The Snowball Blast is an *Op Wolf* clone with, er, snowballs, Acro Aerials sees you skiing off a ramp and striking as many loopy and twisted poses as you'll have broken limbs when you eventually hit the bottom, and the Innertube Thrash throws you into an inflated tyre and shoots you off down the slopes in a race against another bloke in an inflated tyre. All of which makes the final sport, the Downhill Blitz (or 'skiing' as we say in Europe), seem rather on the dull side, really.

The main problem with these last three events is your view point - you watch your bloke front-on and from a distance. By contrast, part of the success of the Half-Pipe section is that you follow on behind him, so you're actually whizzing down the mountain too.

In general though, all the contests are too short and bitty. I also have a more general worry about these multi-game sports sim things – that no matter how well put-together they are, they don't allow all that much scope for anything unusual or interesting to happen. After all, which would *you* rather do - make out like Torville and Dean, or dodge 3,000 invading alien missiles?

Ski Or Die certainly has a nice line in humour, but it's too laid back for its own good. You'll be charmed for the first couple of goes, but then start wondering where the hell the rest of it is. As David Vine wouldn't say, 'It's a bit of wipe-out really, dude'.■ *Andy Ide*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fun, funny and partially successful multi-event snow sports sim – quite charming but, it has to be said, really very slight.

52 PERCENT

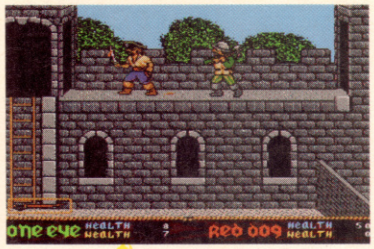
SKULL AND CROSSBONES

Publisher	**Domark**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Walking Circles**
Release Date	**Out now**

For those of us who cherish romantic notions of buckled buccaneers and pillaging pirates braving the waves in search of loot, the life of a privateer seems pretty much ideal. All that robbery and violence – the appeal of leaping aboard some creaking galleon, pregnant with glittering spoils, and getting down to some serious cutlass-swishing, dagger-digging fun seems pretty clear to me.

Yep, it's a laugh a minute on the high seas alright – until the big boys get wind of your little adventures and figure out a way of stretching your neck, of course.

Now all you budding Blackbeards can practice the art of profitable slaughter thanks to Domark's *Skull and Crossbones*. It sounds like a little gem, giving you the chance to kill without mercy until you've tired of producing piles of lifeless corpses and stuffing your breeches with bountiful booty. Unfortunately though, the word *sounds* is actually the most important one in that last sentence. You see, our friends



Hard to know which is the bigger villain – your rival pirates or the terrible gameplay?

at Domark seem to have have forgotten that killing should be a jolly good wheeze rather than a tiresome chore...

Here's the plot: you're striding the deck of your beloved sloop when a band of bloodthirsty curs appear below the mainsail. Your mission is to cut the blighters in half, jump off the ship and chase their leader. He's a wizard who gives you a fair old keel-hauling before stealing off with all your precious gains. Thus the scene is set for a gigantic, multi-level chase, featuring much hacking up of Spaniards and assorted monsters in a number of locations. All very well, if only both hacking and backdrops didn't hold the dubious distinction of looking and feeling exactly the same.

Yes, I'm afraid killing villains is but a matter of arbitrary joystick bashing in *Skull and Crossbones*, and good swordmanship is not necessarily a useful skill at all. A bit of a blow this, especially as we're talking a game where the scrapping should be the high point. Enemies may get tougher, collectable treasure might crop up at regular intervals throughout the game and generally things might progress exactly as you'd expect throughout the seven stages, but nothing ever happens to really make you want to keep going. You're unlikey to be itching to get back into the swing of things once you crash to the ground and shuffle off to that great quarterdeck in the sky. Nope, you're far more likely to pull *S And C* out of your disk drive and boot up something a bit more interesting instead.

There's nothing actually wrong with *Skull and Crossbones*, except that it's desperately and totally useless. For a start, your sword arm can only manage about five moves, of which but two are profitable. For a second start, at certain stages our hero is forced to walk into combat backwards! (If anyone has any records of the infamous Captain Kidd tackling three jolly jacks with his back turned, the British Museum would surely be most interested to see them!) For a third start...but no, I can't go on. Will it just do to say this game is ever so slightly crap? It's not just me either – I've yet to meet a single person in 16-bit land who's got a good word to say about it.

And there we have it, I'm afraid. As an exercise in the absurd *Skull and Crossbones* is unsurpassable, but as a valuable piece of entertainment software it falls somewhat short. Splash out on this game, and you really will have been jolly well rogered...■ *Colin Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Third rate for a C64 game. It must take really clever programmers to make something from a coin-op move this slow. It's a real shame too, as pirates would surely make an excellent subject for a scrolling hack-'em-up.

42 PERCENT

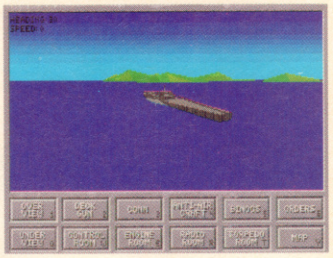
DAS BOOT

Publisher	**Mindscape**
Price	**£30.64**
Programmer(s)	**Three Sixty**
Release Date	**Out now**

'Oh no, please don't make me do it!', I pleaded. 'Don't make me review the submarine game! They're all the same, nothing ever happens, and waiting for it not to happen takes forever, and they always use the same excuse about it being 'realistic', and if people want a real submarine experience why don't they join the navy, and how do you expect me to take seriously a game with a manual that actually tells you how to make the game more frustrating than it already is, and I don't want to have to be the Nazis, and I don't care even if it does have some quite groovy 3D arcade-type sequences, it's still going to be completely tedious, I hate submarine games, I hate them I hate them I hate them! Please?'

It didn't work.

Bearing in mind that I hate submarine games, this is actually quite fun. It isn't as slow and action-free as most games in the genre tend to be, and while there's absolutely tons to do, you can still play it on a fairly superficial level and enjoy it. The graphics are passable and the sound is very atmospheric, you can choose from three different types of sub and from three difficulty levels, there are loads of options to configure the game in favour of playability or realism, and you can even speed the flow of time when there's nothing happening. You can practice just about every aspect of the game, and generally it seems to have been engineered for maximum player- →



Das ist eine Boot. Prepare to dive (etc).

We were going to review this game next month. So we did.

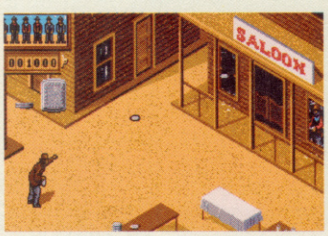
BACK TO THE FUTURE PART 3

Shoot the lamp hanging over on the right hand side for a nifty shooting gallery surprise!

Publisher	**Image Works**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Probe**
Release Date	**Out now**

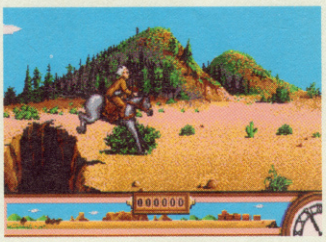
The previous two *Back To The Future* games were both so completely awful that many people wished they could change places with Marty McFly and go back in time and alter events so that they would never be born, thus avoiding ever having to play either of them. Hopes weren't high, therefore, for this, the third game in the series ('The third one? Really?' - reader's voice), which makes for an incredibly strange Believe-It-Or-Not scenario when it turns out to be a bit groovy.

Following what has become the tradition with movie licences, *BTTF3* features several sub-games, each one representing a particular scene from the movie. None of the games are especially mentally taxing – well, actually they're not even slightly mentally taxing – being mostly arcade reactions tests, but put together they form a whole which is at least challenging and varied. It's more than you can say about many of the games we've seen this month, at least.



Never the cold-blooded killer type, Marty takes on the baddies – with pie dishes!

The first section sees Doc Brown galloping across the desert to save the local teacher from plummeting into a ravine in her runaway buckboard, getting caught up in the middle of bank robberies and cavalry battles on the way. The gameplay is terrifyingly simple but very addictive, and a superb banjo rendition of 'Ghost Riders' does wonders for the atmosphere. The other levels feature a shooting gallery, pie-throwing, and the old run-along-the-top-of-a-speeding-train warhorse, but all are excellently executed despite being as old as the hills. Or indeed somewhat older than the hills, come to think of it. The screens are all linked by still shots accompanied by some genuinely chuckle-raising captions, and the music throughout is crap in a nice, endearing sort of way.



Animated horses are always a bit of a risk, but – yes! – these are actually quite good.

My only problem with this game is that the limited format is going to wear a bit thin after a relatively short time, but *BTTF3* is just about addictive enough to get away with it. If ever there was an argument for a midway price between £25 games and budget software, this is it, but even at full whack, you could do a lot worse than this.■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

I feel a bit ashamed of myself for it, but I really enjoyed this. Probably the second best movie licence game ever.

76 PERCENT

friendliness. I still wouldn't play it while there are still dogs in the street, but if it's the kind of thing you ever find yourself inclined towards, it's comfortably the best one I've seen, and you're more than likely to love it to bits.■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

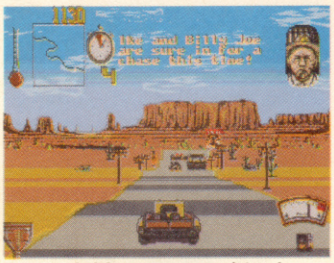
Being as objective as I can be, this is actually rather good. The best compromise between simulation and gameplay yet seen in its field.

75 PERCENT

MOONSHINE RACERS

Publisher	**Millenium**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Peak Star Software**
Release Date	**24th April**

Ike and Billy Joe are good ol' boys. There's nothing they like better than a spot of moonshine, except perhaps making money by running the stuff all over the



Two good ol' boys never meanin' no harm...

county, despite the best attempts of Sheriff Sam to bring an end to their criminal tomfoolery. This happy tale of simple country folks only needs one more thing to make it complete - a *Chase HQ*-style computer game where *you* play the bad guys! And wouldn't you just know it, what should plop through our letterbox but that exact same thing?

It has to be said, this game's got some darn tootin' fine music to it, with top-notch banjo plucking of the very highest order. Other great things it's got going for it include a really nice intro sequence and, er, um...

Yep, it's a clunker. *Moonshine Racers* is a godawful *OutRun* clone with slow, jerky, primitive graphics and gameplay more two-dimensional than a piece of tissue paper that's been run down by a steam-roller. The road lurches around in a completely implausible manner, and the old alternating-stripes-to-create-the-illusion-of-speed effect has rarely been so ineffectual, not to say nauseating. Don't waste your time with it.■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

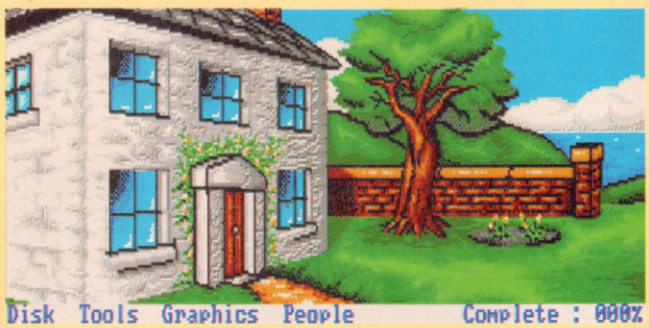
Well, the sound's pretty good throughout (though some actual sound effects would be nice) and to be honest it's not *quite* as bad as *Chase HQ*, but then what is? Inexplicable disk-swapping, no gameplay, in a word, crap.

40 PERCENT

A bizarre choice of licence gives their Famous Five their very own adventure game. Lashings of ginger beer all round, we'd say.

THE FAMOUS FIVE

Five very famous characters indeed. The game actually gives you the opportunity to switch between the ones you're playing at any time. (Except for Timmy the dog of course). Enid Blyton fans have never had it so good.



Here we are at Aunt Fanny's cottage. (Nice, isn't it?) Notice the options bar below the picture. This allows such things as loading and saving, character swapping and picture on/off selections to be made.

Publisher	**Enigma Variations**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Nick Byron**
(design)	**Colin Jordon**
(graphics)	**Michael Hanrahan**
Release Date	**Out now**

For those reared on `Commando' comics and Action Men the antics of Noddy, the Secret Seven and the Famous Five will probably mean little. But those who, like myself, modelled their childhoods and, indeed, philosophical outlook on the wholesome world of Enid Blyton's characters, will no doubt feel their hearts palpitate when they catch a glimpse of *Five On A Treasure Island*, the *Famous Five*'s first computer outing.

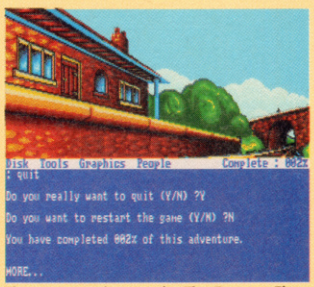
The Five themslves consist of Julian (the tough, mature one), Anne (a bit of a girlie), Dick (rather weedy), George (reputedly a girl) and Timmy (the dog). The packaging shows them all kitted out in 501s, Nikes and sleeveless t-shirts, but there's no hiding the fact that, given the choice, they'd go for shorts, sensible shoes and v-neck jumpers every time. And roll hoops along by hitting them with sticks.

Having collected The Five at the train station, Aunt Fanny takes them to her cottage. Checking out the attic reveals a dusty old trunk. Mmmm. Wonder what's in there? (Etc)

Now, as with most of these types, they're heavily into healthy outdoor activities – `adventures' as they like to refer to them. To this end Julian, Dick and Anne have gone to spend their `hols' with George's mother, who's called Aunt Fanny. (Oh dear.) She lives in a `gay' cottage by the sea in a village called Kirrin where there are bound to be heaps and heaps of mysteries for the gang to solve.

What you've got to do is tell them what to do, adventure game-style. That means typing in things like 'N', 'E', 'GET ROPE', and getting back answers like 'I don't understand', 'You can't do that' or 'Anne slaps you in the face' – that sort of thing. By making sure you've got the right objects in the right places at the right times and doing the right things with them you should have the mystery wrapped up and everyone home in time for tea (with plenty of bread and jam). You can take control of any of the Five, and swap between them at will, while anyone you're not controlling goes off and does their own `thang'.

There are plenty of nice pictures to look at, some fairly predictable but very Blytonesque puzzles to solve and everything proceeds at a cracking pace. Unless you've got an insurmountable aversion to Enid Blyton or adventure games (which, come to think of it, probably accounts for quite a few people), I strongly suggest you pack some sandwiches into your satchel, cry 'Tally Ho!' and jump right in there.■ *Jonathan Davies*



The command parser in *The Famous Five* really does feel very familair. Fans of the old 8-bit game *The Hobbit* will probably love this one.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

There's another way to look at this – that the game's a load of manky old rubbish, and doesn't belong in this decade – but I wouldn't want to be the one to suggest it, of course. I think I'll leave you to make up your own minds...

43 percent. – Mark Ramshaw

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's hard to imagine a less fashionable subject for a computer game licence, but the result is a jolly enjoyable romp, in an adventure-gamish sort of way.

60 PERCENT

THE *Midnight Oil*

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ATARI USER REVIEW

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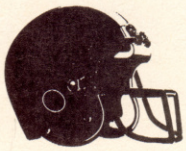
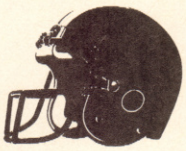


HEADCOACH V.3



THE GAME

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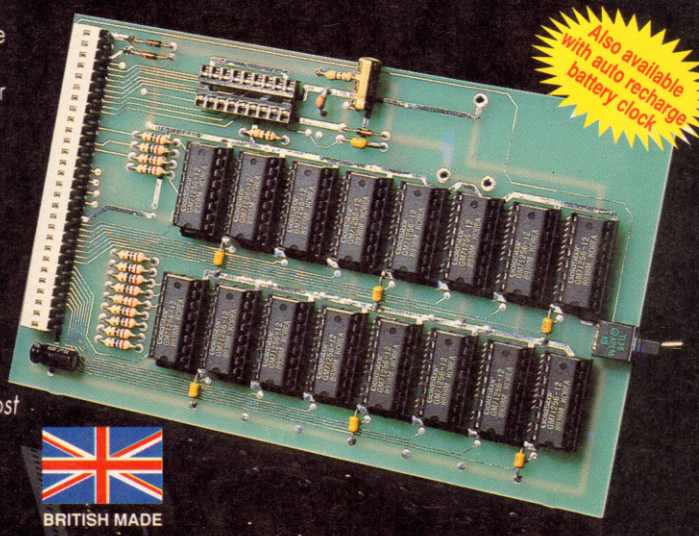

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CRYSTALS OF ARBOREA

Publisher **Silmarils**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **Louismarie and Andre Rocques, Michel Pernot,** *(Graphic Artist)* **Jean-Christophe Charter**
Release Date **Late April 1991**

There's one sort of person who's likely to get very excited about this indeed – the die-hard *Lords Of Midnight* fan. Hey guys, this one's aimed directly at you, being nothing less (or more) than a French interpretation of Mike Singleton's 8-bit classic. Younger players may find it easier to liken it to *Midwinter*, but without the solid 3D graphics, futuristic scenario, and certainly without the depth. They might also find themselves wondering what all the fuss was about.

So yes, it's a sort of strategy role-playing adventure, with you leading a team of six characters (a mix of warriors, wizards and rangers, of which you'd be wise to take two of each) around a mysterious island in a mix of so-called 3D and overhead view map modes. The search is on for four crystals which have to be recovered and restored to their rightful places in towers dotted about the island – both crystals and towers are placed randomly each new game, so if you're so taken with *Arborea* that you'd like to play it again and again it'll be a different experience each time.

Say cheese! Your party of characters – rangers, warriors and wizards – line up for a team photo before they go their seperate ways.

Most of your time is spent searching of course – not just for the crystals and the towers, but for various magical abilities (like healing potions, the ability to teleport and so on) which have to be found or earned (often by entering the house of a local warrior or wizard and answering a simple question) to give you any chance of completing the game. It's not all walking about though (but there is a lot of it – the French programmers claim there are 16,000 different locations in the game!) as every so often things are broken up by the odd scrap with groups of baddies you'll encounter. And I do mean 'odd' too – these are strange, grid-based strategic affairs, not unlike chess. This certainly isn't a game you could accuse of being packed with gratuitous violent action.

And there we have it really. *Crystals Of Arborea* can certainly be quite pretty (especially at night) if not outstandingly so, but while it has a lot of screens it doesn't seem to be blessed with a great deal of variety. Add to that a distinctly slug-like pace and rules that seem to have been picked at random (you can only enter a wizard's house when you have another wizard with you - why?) and it all seems rather pointless. I found it one big snooze. ■ *Matt Bielby*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Some nicely drawn graphics, but it just asks you to do the same sort of thing for hours on end. Dull, repetitive and ultimately pretty pointless.

48 PERCENT

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR

A medieval tale of chivalry (and slow disk access)

Publisher **Virgin**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **Synergistic Software**
Release Date **April 1991**

Oh dear. They certainly don't seem to treat kings like they used to. Take that Arthur, for instance – ruler of all England, bearer of Excalibur, loved by all...or so you might think. 'Not so', say Virgin. In fact, his power base was so tenuous that on his death everything fell apart quite rapidly. Lord Constantine was next in line for the throne, but lacking the muscle of Arthur, and without Lancelot's help (who was too busy serving penance for getting a bit friendly with Guenevere), the power of Round Table all but dissolved. And that's where you come in – armed with a sword and your wits, you play Lord Constantine on a mission to claim your rightful place at Camelot.

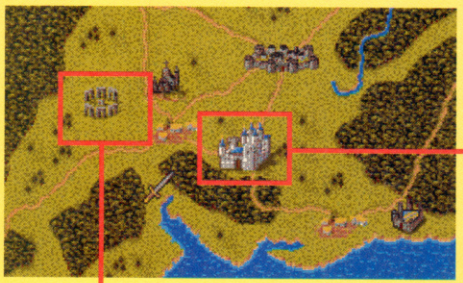
Thankfully avoiding the temptation to re-tell the story of King Arthur yet again, *Spirt Of Excalibur* manages to conjure the same atmosphere, use many of the characters from the legend, yet still be fresh and original – no mean feat. Splitting Constantine's story into five sections gives realistic goals to achieve, which range from taking the throne and recruiting knights to tracking down Lancelot and finally defeating Morgan Le Fey (King Arthur's evil half-sister). At the same time everything is presented very nicely indeed.

In fact, with its 16 screen map of Arthurian Britain and numerous graphical interludes, it looks like the sort of thing Cinemaware might come up with if they produced a role-playing kind of game. Unfortunately the similarities don't end there, for the most striking thing about *Excalibur* is its speed. There isn't any. It's no good trying to produce a sprawling tale of heroism and chivalry if it takes nearly twenty seconds simply to talk to a character. The disk-swapping is bad enough, but the access-time is truly appalling.

It's a shame that the whole thing moves so slowly, because in many ways it really is quite enchanting.

THOSE ICONS

Sir Constantine (and friend) complete the trek to Camelot. Saxon hordes defeated and the loyalty of knights gained, the throne awaits. (Hurrah!)



A visit to Stonehenge is vital. Seek out one of the druids here – they should be able to provide you with handy clues to the quests.

Suitably medieval music parps away to itself, while screen backgrounds are lavish affairs, with elegant abbeys and towering castles providing eye-pleasing backdrops to the action. Even the fight scenes are handled competently, with both one-on-one combat and larger scale conflicts between armies allowing an agreeable amount of player interaction.

Spirit Of Excalibur has so many things going for it. The strategy and role-playing bits work well, and close up action compares with games such as *Defender Of The Crown*, albeit with greater depth. It's just that the whole thing comes across as badly bodged together, the sum not being equal to the parts. A shame. ■ *Mark Ramshaw*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Pretty, but unless you are prepared to make several cups of coffee while each sequence loads, forget it.

62 PERCENT

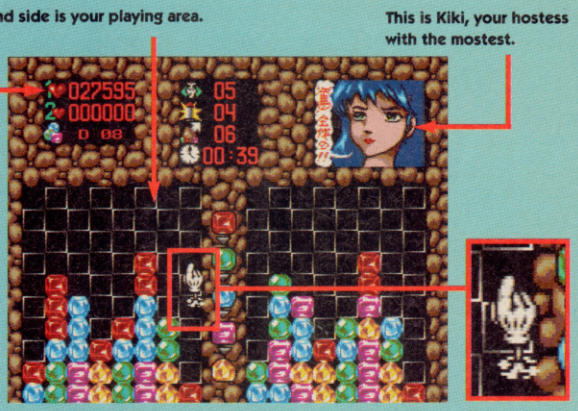
DEMONIAK

Publisher **Palace Software**
Price **£29.99**
Programmer(s) **Chris Stangroom,** *(Graphics)* **Jo Walker,** *(Story and Text)* **Alan Grant**
Release Date **April 1991**

Erm, yes, I suppose we'd better admit to first things first. This is a text adventure. Not a sexy Delphine-style adventure with lots of graphics, the occasional arcade sequence and a friendly pull-down menu parser, but your standard old fashioned text adventure with the occasional still screen, lots of writing and, erm, that's about it.

Almost ludicrous to expect anyone to pay this sort of premium price for it then, isn't it? Well, yes. And then again no. You see, *Demoniak*, in it's own quiet little way, is actually rather innovative. It's been written by a proper writer for a start – Alan Grant, a mainstay of 2000AD who's handled Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog and others, as well as achieved considerable success in the States with his version of Batman. Grant has thrown in the sort of grotesque, darkly humorous sci-fi/superhero plot readers of his comics would expect, had a good deal of fun with his grossly exaggerated characters and – yes! – actually written some text that's fun

Arcade quality puzzling, Japanese style. (And it's cute too!)



To complete the screen the playfield on the left must be manipulated to match the one on the right.

Your pointer.

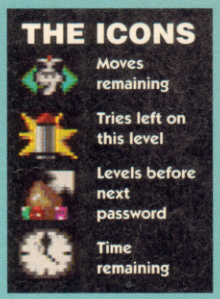
GEM-X

Publisher **Demonware**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **T.Lampyun,** *(music)* **C Hyslic**
Release Date **Mid-April 1991**

A late entry in the abstract-puzzle-game stakes, *Gem-X* immediately invites comparisons with both Ocean's *Puzznic* and the Sega arcade game *Columns*. Yes, it's sort of similar to both, though look beneath the cosmetics and you'll see that in gameplay terms *Gem-X* has a style all its own.

Briefly, the game presents you with a split screen, one half of which contains a pile of variously-coloured gems, the other half of which contains...er, a pile of variously-coloured gems. The idea is to make the pile on the left match exactly with the pile on the right by means of a simple transformation principle. Clicking the mouse (or joystick) on a particular gem will cause it to change colour by two steps in a given sequence. The four gems around it will also change, but only by one step in the sequence. If a transformation would cause the colour of any gem to go beyond the last colour in the sequence, that gem will disappear and the others in the pile will fall down to fill the gap *(Klax*-style). You have only a certain number of moves in which to complete a screen, and you must do it inside a time limit too. And really that's all there is to it.

THE ICONS



Rather than go into a deep and involved analysis of the game and then coming up with a conclusion, I'll give you the conclusion now. *Gem-X* is utterly, utterly wonderful, and here's why. From the start, the game absolutely oozes class. Presentation-wise it looks like an arcade game, and it's structured like one too, with very easy initial levels gently drawing you in, building in difficulty until you're really hooked, then hitting you with screens that will make your jaw drop to the floor in horror and your brain beg for mercy. You won't be able to leave it alone, though, because it's all wrapped up with luscious graphics and impossibly lovely sound, including sampled speech that'll steal your heart away and refuse to give it back. You'll find yourself actually talking back to *Gem-X*, but no-one will think you're weird because everyone else will be doing exactly the same, completely transfixed by the angelic voice of Kiki, the game's Japanese hostess. Kiki's friends also make the odd appearance in the game, as every time you complete a few screens you get a codeword that lets you start on the higher levels, each one delivered by a beautiful Japanese girl with no clothes on (but tastefully obscured by a fluffy bunny rabbit or some other such icon of cuteness). You probably wouldn't be all that surprised if I was to tell you this makes for some pretty major-league addictiveness, so I won't waste my breath and we'll all just take it as read, okay?

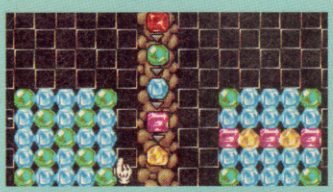
When this game came into the office, we all had a look and went 'Oh yes, that looks nice, might have a go on that in a while if I've got nothing else to do.' Some time later, the security guard was enquiring whether we in fact had any homes to go to, as it was the middle of the night and he'd sort of like to lock up the building. We threw him out of a third floor window and had another game. And another game. And one last game. And 'Okay, just one more game and then I'm definitely going home.' And then...well, you get the picture. *Gem-X*. Why haven't you bought it yet? ■ *Stuart Campbell*

TRANSFORMATION SEQUENCE

Clicking on a gem will transform it into a gem two lower down in the sequence. Adjacent gems will be transformed one gem down the sequence. Once past the yellow gem, they will disintegrate.

FOR EXAMPLE. Clicking on the gem in the centre of this grid...

... results in the pattern looking like this.



Getting the gems to match is easier than it looks. In fact, one simple move...

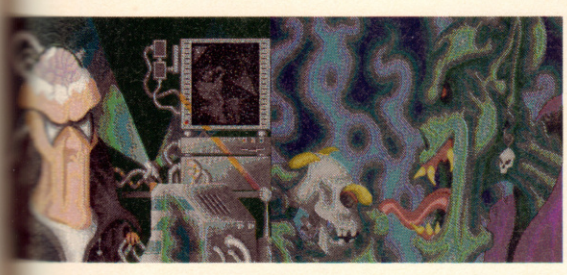
...and we're nearly there. One more move...

...and we've done it. The key to Gem-X is forethought (and a lot of guesswork).

THE BOTTOM LINE

The most fun you'll ever have having your brain tortured (unless of course you really hate puzzle games, in which case it's a bit of a non-starter).

88 PERCENT



***Demoniak* offers the best of both worlds – lavish pictures *and* intelligent text. The intro sequence pictured here sets a suitably ominous tone for the dark procedings to come.**

to read. Witty, surprising, it's almost an adventure game first.

Grant's only partly the star of *Demoniak* though. The other is Palace's new Pure Fiction adventure system, which features what appears to be a very clever parser indeed. As the adventure unfolds it allows you to switch between the main characters (a sort of constantly bickering and mutually suspicious superhero group of the future) and see things from slightly different perspectives – one character will take particular note of a hunky, half alien superhero's laser gun, for instance, while another will be more concerned with his 'tight, oh so tight' jump suit. It's played for laughs, yes, but these different perspectives actually have some bearing on the way the game develops. Certainly, if one of your characters is rude to or snubs another one early in the game, it'll be held against you and you'll find the injured party far less interested in helping you out later on.

Backed up by intro sequences and the occasional still screen in an impressively comic book style (new artist Jo Walker looks like a name to watch) *Demoniak* deserves to do well. It has to be said though that it's still saddled with lots of text only adventure type problems – the fact that you can find yourself stuck trying to open a certain door for ages, the problems with what vocabulary it'll understand – as well as that (what seems to me at least) rather optimistic price. The next Pure Fiction game will apparently be a very different beast indeed, with a lot more done in terms of graphics, but in the meantime here's an interesting text adventure, well thought out and well written. Whatever next? ■ *Matt Bielby*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A clever parser, interesting text and the odd nice graphic go some way towards reinventing the text adventure. 1 meg only though.

57 PERCENT

You've read our opinion of *Demoniak*, but just what does Alan Grant think of it? Find out in a special interview in this month's True Stories.

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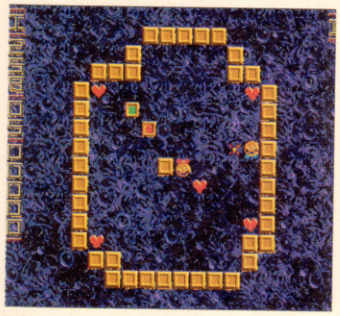
THE POWER

Publisher Demonware
Price £24.99
Programmer(s) Johannes Lipp
Release Date Out now



Take a pinch of *Atomix*, mix with a nifty rockin' soundtrack, and that's *The Power*.

In which Demonware continue with their theme of releasing games with titles which are simply excuses to use remixes of songs by Number One pop stars Snap as soundtracks (and which also bear uncanny resemblances to other games). First came *Ooops Up*, a shameless *Pang* clone, now there's *The Power*, an arcade puzzle game owing more than a little to Thalion's *Atomix*. Naughty old Demonware, but nobody's going to mind that much if they've managed to turn out a good game, so let's see if they have...

Firstly, let's deal with that soundtrack. It's very excellent indeed. Right, that's that out of the way. Secondly, let's deal with the plagiarism aspect. There's no denying that this is a very similar game to *Atomix*, but it's just different enough to avoid accusations of a rip-off, largely because it's much more of a collect-'em-up than the earlier game, which had distinctly *Boulder Dash*-like elements to it. Thirdly and lastly, let's deal with whether it's a good game or not. And yes, you have to say that it is, really. It's certainly been superbly programmed, although the control method could have been a little better thought out, and the scrolling backdrops are particularly nice.

There are tons of options too, so you can play the game the way that suits you best, and if that's not enough there's a level editor so you can make it as easy or as hard as you like. Passwords also make frequent appearances, so you shouldn't have too much of a problem getting stuck on a screen and having to trek through the previous ones to get to it all the time, especially considering you also get eight continues to play with. Generally *The Power* is very well put together, but for some reason it didn't really grab me, and I didn't find I had any pressing desire to get to the next level (and I liked *Atomix*). I can't really put my finger on anything, it's technically very good, but *The Power* didn't do very much for me at all.■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Beautifully done, but a tad awkward to play, and seriously derivative.

70 PERCENT

Heavy on the politics, light on the shooting.

'NAM

One third of the way into the war, and it's all quiet on the far eastern front. Clicking on the reports icon will reveal all.

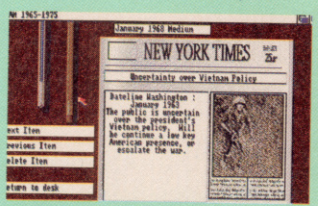
Publisher Domark
Price £24.95
Programmer(s) Colin Boswell
(design) Matthew Stibbe
Release Date Out now

Vietnam is a small, quiet, banana-shaped country on the bottom right-hand corner of South East Asia that's largely covered in trees. Or at least it was until the Americans dropped defoliant all over it – just part of their strategy in the 1965-1975 Vietnam War, when they went to the aid of South Vietnam which was in danger of being overrun by communists from North Vietnam. As historians or regular movie-goers will probably know, the war turned into a bit of a fiasco, with the Americans getting a sound thrashing for the first time in history from the supposedly inferior commies. This was largely due to the American strategies being unable to cope with jungle warfare, which meant the reds ran rings around them using guerilla tactics to slowly eat away at the Americans' morale. It was also a war full of tragedies and atrocities which rapidly turned the American public against it, leaving their politicians to try to extract themselves from it without losing too much face. (Something they didn't manage.)

All these aspects have been incorporated into a game called *'Nam*, which has been designed by a history student at Oxford University and is also (spookily enough) the subject of this review. It's basically a wargame at heart, where you've got to guide units of American and 'Free World' forces around the map against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong troops.

Your soldiers are divided into four corps which each patrol a section of the country, beating up baddies whenever they bump into any. However there's also quite a complex 'political' aspect where you can chose to play the part of the president and decide expenditure and things while watching your popularity go up and down and reading newspaper reports (which seemingly bear little relation to what's happening on the battlefield – I was getting reports of drug abuse among the chaps on the battlefield when I knew there weren't actually any troops out there).

This fetching picture of Nixon acts as the central control screen. All other command screens are accessed by clicking on sheets of paper and so on.



The key to winning is to know just what is happening in Vietnam, which is where the New York Times comes in handy.

Apart from a few glitches here and there, which mainly seem to be as a result of dodgy programming and which allowed me to win the war on one occasion without actually sending in any troops at all, *'Nam* seems to be a complex and accurate simulation, effectively capturing the hopelessness of the war. I doubt you'll be plagued by flashbacks for the rest of your life, though.■ *Jonathan Davies*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A well thought out and potentially challenging wargame that's let down a bit on the technical side of things.

69 PERCENT

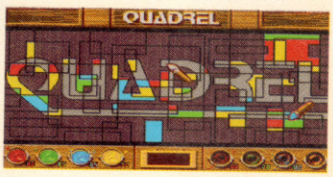
QUADREL

Publisher Loriciel
Price £24.99
Programmer(s) Najib Chelly
Release Date Out now

French-puzzle-games-where-you-have-to-fill-in-various-grids-with-a-limit-of-four-different-colours-and-where-two-touching-shapes-cannot-be-of-the-same-colour, eh? Who needs 'em? Nobody I know, that's for sure.

According to the instructions, 'The greatest games are usually the ones with rules easy to understand'(sic), which is a fair point, but doesn't actually apply to this one as the rules aren't particularly easy, and it's pretty crap too. The main problem is that the whole concept just isn't fun enough - it's more like the sort of game your Auntie Molly insists the entire family play when you go round to her house for Christmas than something on a par with the likes of *Tetris* and *Klax*.

The idea revolves around the theory that you can colour in any type of map with only four colours without any two countries of the same colour touching each other. A fair idea for a puzzle game as these things go, I suppose, but a bit marred by the limited appeal of the horrible block-like graphics they've presented us with here (wouldn't a few wibbly country-like shapes have been better?). Another problem is the lack of challenge - you can fiddle around with so much of the game, including chosing which screen you start on – that there's no real excitement left to the thing. There's not even any guessing what the next screen is going to be like as there isn't one (each new screen is treated independently as a brand new game). And you can effectively 'cheat' as well by turning off the time limit, going back on your moves and asking for help.



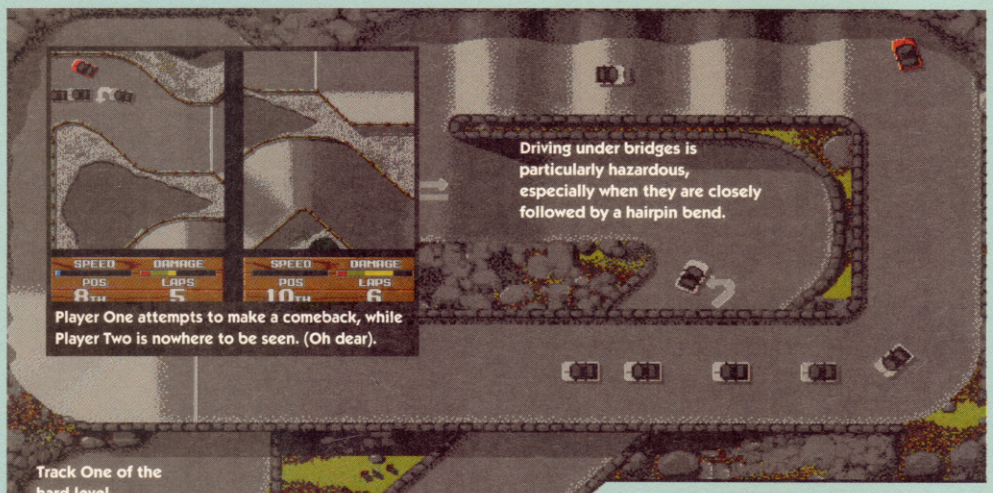
Bright colours, dull game. *Quadrel* is actually one big snooze.

As you may have gathered, this game didn't really appeal to me, although this may simply be a matter of opinion. Perhaps the die-hard puzzle addict (and a friend) will find that the two player game offers more entertainment where (instead of you taking on the computer) each player starts with a different amount of paint, and then takes it in turns to fill in t he grid – the loser being the player who's first unable to fill in an area. Overall, I'd say that *Quadrel* is a bit of a try-before-you-buyer.■ *Rich Pelley*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Dull to look at, dull to play –*Quadrel* is one of the least appealing puzzle games about. For the same effect get a friend, some graph paper and four coloured pens – then see whether you get £25 worth of fun out of it.

52 PERCENT



Driving under bridges is particularly hazardous, especially when they are closely followed by a hairpin bend.

Player One attempts to make a comeback, while Player Two is nowhere to be seen. (Oh dear).

Track One of the hard level. Anticipation is the key to winning in *Supercars 2*. If you don't learn the track patterns, you haven't got a chance.

New power-ups and a two-player mode sadly fail to improve upon the original. (In fact, they make it worse!)

SUPERCARS 2

Publisher Gremlin
Price £24.95
Programmer(s) Magnetic Fields
Release Date Out now

This is a game with an impeccable pedigree. Its predecessor, *Supercars*, (pretty obvious really) was one of the most popular overhead-view racing games ever on the Amiga, and also one of the best (as its placing in our own All-Time Top 100 shows). The programming team, Magnetic Fields, have been responsible for some other major successes of late too, notably *Lotus Esprit TurboChallenge*. Add to that Gremlin generally developing something of a knack for driving games, and expectations for this one were understandably high.

Sad to report, then, that it doesn't really live up to them. Not that it's a bad game by any stretch of the imagination, but it hasn't really got what it takes to make the major leagues. Why? Well firstly, there's been very little advance made on the original *Supercars*. The game is the same *Super-Sprint*-with-add-on-weaponry mix as before, with only the two-player option adding any new gameplay features to speak of. Graphically there's been an improvement, with some variation in the background types, but again there isn't really anything remarkable happening.

The conversation sequences of the original have been kept, but this time you have to contend with The Dept of Transport, an Environmental Health Officer, the police, journalists, sponsors and solicitors. The formula however is the same. Choose (or in some instances, guess) from three replies to given questions – get it right and you win cash or championship points, get it wrong and you lose them. More significant are the changes to the add-ons you can buy. Turbo boost and mines have replaced power steering and retro-thrust, which might not seem that important, but wait! In both games your car's road-holding isn't up to much, coupling poor cornering with over-sensitive steering to the extent that it's very hard to keep in a straight line, so the power steering and other handling improvements available in the first game were actually rather crucial. They've taken them out for the sequel and I can't for the life of me see why. Add to this the narrow, twisting courses and the large number of opposing cars, and what you have is a game that never really gets going to the degree it should.

This is accentuated in the two-player game, where the split screen (impressive though it may be) cuts down visibility and gives very little time to react to the unpredictable bends in the course. It gets really ridiculous when long tunnels crop up, forcing you to drive blind, hitting walls and cars with monotonous regularity. It all makes for a very high level of frustration indeed.

Although it's all very efficiently done and nicely presented, the changes they've made have actually emphasised the weak points of the game without adding very much. Oh dear. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

Selecting one player mode gives a decidedly different outlook on life. Those hairpin bends aren't quite so unexpected anymore.

ON THE OTHER HAND... This really is closest thing you'll find to Scalextric on a computer. That does result in high frustration levels, but it's still pretty damn compulsive, and is an ideal game to play when friends are round. The difficulty curve could have been a bit more gentle though.

84 percent. – Mark Ramshaw

THE BOTTOM LINE

Simply too frustrating to be addictive. Nice to look at perhaps, but sadly inferior to the original game.

73 PERCENT

INT'NATIONAL ICE HOCKEY

Publisher Impulze
Price £24.95
Programmer(s) Gareth Briggs
Release Date Out now

Developed over two years, this is one of a very small number of ice hockey games available, so Impulze are clearly hoping to clean up amongst the millions of ice-hockey-loving Amiga owners in Britain. (Er, do you think we should tell them..?) To this end they've produced a game with three levels of difficulty, seemingly based on the relative skills of some real-life international sides. As well as the traditional one-or two-player modes and variable length of game, you can choose from several ways of deciding which of your players you control, and even how your team restructures itself to fill the gap when one of your players is sent to the sin bin. But anyway, onto the actual game...

Oh dear. The game. This is where things start to go wrong, unfortunately. The match is played in a very strange perspective – almost an overhead view but slightly distorted to give a rather crap pseudo-3D effect. The ice element provides a good excuse for the players to slide around without moving their legs, so animation doesn't amount to much. Sound doesn't feature to any significant extent at all, and as for playability, well, it would have been a good idea to have some.

The tension rises as your goal comes under attack. Note the spotlight trained on the player currently under your control.

Large parts of the game are spent skating up the rink with the puck, shooting at goal, missing, chasing the puck as it rebounds all the way back to the other end of the rink, then doing the whole thing again. Passing is unnecessary and (with no overhead view scanner) largely impossible, shooting is largely a matter of guesswork, and tackling appears to be entirely at the whim of the computer.

Fouls result in long pauses while the referee holds on to the puck for an inexplicably extended period of time, and since practically every attempted tackle results in a foul this makes for an extremely stop-start kind of game. Joystick responses are confusing, and while the half-time highlights are a nice touch, they're really spitting in the wind. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Cheap and cheerful. Except, er, it's not cheap). You can buy *Speedball 2* for the same price, and that makes it look like a very bad deal indeed.

48 PERCENT

The Bard is back in Thief Of Fate, but it's still the same old song.

THE BARD'S TALE III

Publisher **Electronic Arts**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **Interplay Productions**
Release Date **April**

Having cut my role-playing teeth on the original C64 version of *The Bard's Tale* a few years ago, I was pretty keen to see how things had changed two games and one computer on. The short answer is 'they haven't much', but we'll get onto that later in the review.

For the uninitiated, the *Bard's Tale* series offer a computerised version of the fantasy role-playing games so beloved of sixth-formers everywhere. The player controls one or more alter-egos, and guides them through a make-believe world, collecting treasure, fighting nasties and generally having an adventurous old time.

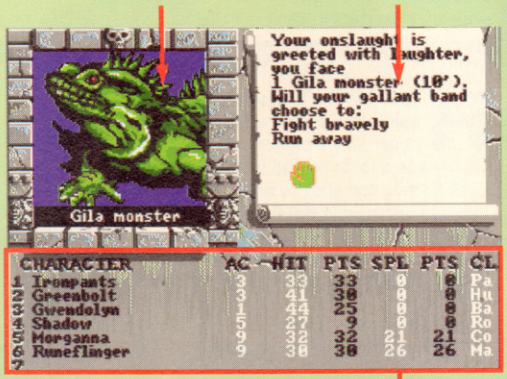
Mercilessly killing every bad guy around has its rewards - in fact, here they are!

Assuming you don't rabidly loathe role-playing on sight (and plenty of people do) it all sounds like it'd make a pretty effective formula for a computer game, doesn't it? And it does – the only problem being that lots of people seem to have realised this, meaning we've got fantasy role playing-style games coming out of our ears.

To really make its mark then, a new one has to be something pretty special, which is where *The Bard's Tale III* falls down. It really is business as usual, I'm afraid. From the character creation sequences (where you choose fighters, bards, magic users etc and modify their attributes) to the Dungeons & Dragons-style combat sequences, the whole thing gives a curious feeling of deja-vu. Yes, we've seen it all before, and yet...and yet, I have to admit it still makes for a damn satisfying game. You're certainly not short changed as far as places to go and things to do are concerned – there are potentially months of playing time in here – especially as new areas of the game open up to you as you go on. Unfortunately, lack of innovation aside, *The Bard's Tale III* falls down in a couple of areas. The first is presentation – simply put, it looks and plays like a C64 game, and you really should be able to expect a bit more for this sort of money. The other problem is the disappointing lack of atmosphere. One of the most important aspects of successful fantasy role-playing is the feeling of 'being there' and the creation of a sense of wonder, all too often forgotten in computer versions. A bit less of the fighting and a bit more of the old character interaction would be nice.

Just three of the bad guys waiting to shake you warmly by the throat.

Overall then no disgrace to the genre, but (as they say in all the best school reports) they really must try harder. ■ *Mark Ramshaw*



THE BOTTOM LINE

A competent and highly playable role-player in the classic tradition. What was excellent five years ago, however, is in serious need of an overhaul in 1991.

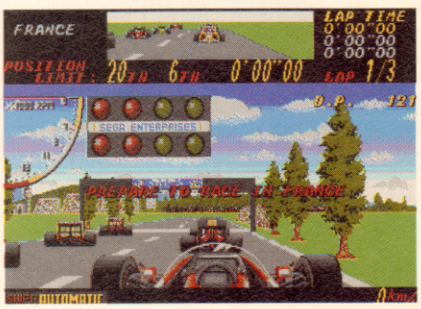
67 PERCENT

SUPER MONACO GP

Publisher **US Gold**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **ZZKJ**
Release Date **Out Now**

'Audacious' is the word many people use to describe US Gold's attempt to convert the monster Sega coin-op *Super Monaco GP* to the home micros. They said it just couldn't be done, they said such a huge mass of detailed graphics couldn't be shunted around the screen of the humble Amiga at anything like the required speed. And you know, in a funny kind of way, they were absolutely right.

And in another funny way they were wrong. What USG have released here is a very groovy racing game that bears practically no resemblance to the arcade machine whose name it shares. The most glaringly obvious difference is the addition of three new tracks (France, Brazil and Spain) which you have to successfully race on before you can be let loose on the famous Monaco circuit, a very dubious concept indeed. If you're used to the Monaco track from the arcades, you're going to expect to get the Monaco track, and preferably without having to traipse halfway round the world first. You can see why they've done it – one track might be okay in the arcades, but would look suspiciously thin on a £25 game – but US Gold's *SMGP* doesn't give you the option of simply playing the arcade game, and this has to be seen as a major flaw.



The qualifying round completed, it's onto France for the first real race. Monaco GP here we come.

So not a great conversion, but is *SMGP* a good game in its own right? 'Yes', is the short answer to that. Programmer ZZKJ was previously responsible for *Super Hang-On*, the fastest and probably the best Amiga racing game available right up until the release of *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*. So who better to program a race game where speed was of the utmost importance? *SMGP* moves just as fast as the arcade game, even with lots of scenery on the screen, which is quite an achievement on the Amiga for a start. It also plays very well, with sensible and adjustable mouse control so you can find the steering sensitivity level that suits you best. The computer cars are pretty intelligent without being completely impossible to get past, giving you a real sense of achievement if you do manage to haul yourself up a few places. The game's major irritant is that one serious crash puts you completely out of the race, something which tends to happen with dispiriting regularity. In fact it's so tough that many players may never make it to the Monaco track at all! Still, if you're naturally persistent, this one's well worth a play or three. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fast and playable, but maddeningly difficult, and nothing like the coin-op. Nice, but a bit duff as a conversion.

72 PERCENT

WARLOCK - THE AVENGER

Publisher **Millenium**
Price **£24.99**
Programmer(s) **John Gibbons,**
(music) **Eldritch The Cat**
Release Date **April**

Warlock is the third game in a series which has until now only appeared on 8-bit machines. The first, *Druid*, was one of a long line of *Gauntlet* clones which came out around the time of the official *Gauntlet* licence, and was generally the best-received. Although the Amiga wasn't big news at the time, *Druid* has since been converted and is included in *Warlock* as an optional introductory level. *Warlock* itself is largely more of the same, featuring 8 increasingly tough mazes populated by all the usual social misfits with attitude problems. And, er, that's about it.

The first thing you notice about *Warlock* is how very similar it is to the original game. The graphics follow exactly the same style, and the gameplay is identical, consisting simply of trudging rather slowly around the scrolling mazes, zapping baddies, collecting useful items, and looking for the way out. In fact, *Warlock* appears to be less of a sequel →

to the earlier game than an expansion set, adding tougher levels and different baddies but nothing that you could actually describe as 'new'. As such, it's a success, proving tricky and pretty engrossing, but is liable to be a bit of a disappointment if you're expecting a genuinely new game.

Someone's made a bit of a cock-up on the presentation front too, as starting a new game entails waiting some 35 seconds for a long picture to painstakingly scroll across the screen and then for the game to think about loading again. Not too terrible in itself, but with only one life (which won't last you very long at all in your first few games) you'll see a lot of this picture, and grow to hate it as I did.

There's just time to check out that treasure chest, then make a sharp exit before those two green meanies close in.

What *Warlock* does, it does pretty well. If you want a slightly slower paced version of *Gauntlet* then fine, here it is, and it'll provide plenty of short-term fun. At the end of the day though it amounts to nothing more than a marginal re-spray of a five year-old game, and as such it's very hard to justify the £25 price tag. ■
Stuart Campbell

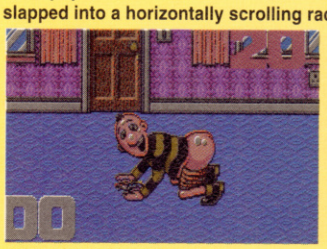
THE BOTTOM LINE
Easy to play but difficult to get very far into, with re-loading sequences that are actually longer than the game which precedes them. A blast from the past that doesn't really cut it in today's market.
65 PERCENT

Fnaar, fnaar! Right, that's got the gratuitous VIZ references out of the way – now is it any good?

VIZ

Publisher	**Virgin**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Probe**
Release Date	**Out now**

Hyped as 'The biggest rip off of them all' and coming complete with the promise that 'You'll never play a bigger load of crap', *Viz - The Game* clearly has a lot to live up to. Programmers Probe have got off to a good start by setting out to produce a game that's unashamedly Not For Sale To Children – it's packed to bursting with steaming great lumps of rude language and toilet humour. Thus we get some highly impressive graphic renditions of many of the comic's most popular characters and some deeply crap music, slapped into a horizontally scrolling race game featuring Johnny Fartpants, Buster Gonad and Biffa Bacon.



Johnny Fartpants doing what comes naturally, in an effort to inflate balloons.

Biffa and Buster make a frantic (and oh so wacky) sprint across a handy log.

Your task, as one of the three, is to race through five areas of Fulchester (the beach, the park, the disco and so on), hindered by the entire Viz collection of characters (with the extrordinary exception of Billy The Fish). To improve your chances, you can utilise your own special 'gifts' (Johnny farts, Biffa fights, and Buster bounces on his unfeasibly large testicles) to clear obstacles or avoid a particularly 'sticky' patch – but only a limited number of times per level, the number determined by how well you do in a couple of sub-games. These are nearly all of the joystick waggler variety (well, what did you expect), and feature events like Biffa drinking or Buster bouncing. But what's that I hear you cry? ('Never mind all the nobby waffle, is it any good?', it sounded a bit like). Ahem.

Oh dear, we seem to have missed Roger's enlightening (but unprintable) dialogue. Meanwhile, Biffa picks a fight with a log.

Well now. *Viz - The Game* is a funny old kettle of hatstands. It's very, very simple indeed, but – well, actually there isn't a 'but'. It's probably one of the shallowest games ever seen on a 16-bit computer. You run from left to right, you avoid baddies, and, um, you fart occasionally. The game compensates for this lack of depth with a very high difficulty setting (which would be fine if it wasn't for the long wait between games) and of course the irreverent (to understate things just a touch) humour. This is generally well in keeping with the Viz style (especially the Top Tips), but you get a couple of problems transferring them to a computer game. One is that after you've seen all the jokes once (which doesn't take long) they aren't funny anymore, but the other is that what works on scrappy, throwaway, fanzine-style bog paper looks too calculating and out of place in this high-tech setting. All this probably makes the game sound completely crap, but *Viz* is actually the kind of thing that you'll find yourself coming back to, simply because it's fun to play. It's an irritating kind of fun, because how you do in the race can depend on which lane you get put in at the start, but fun it nonetheless is. And frankly that's about all there is to say about it. *Viz - The Game* is as two-dimensional as its paper counterpart, and if £25 seems to you like a lot of money to pay for a simple game featuring much the same jokes every time you play it, well yes, you're probably right. ■
Stuart Campbell

THE BOTTOM LINE
Good fun, and succeeds in capturing the comic's feel to a large degree, but that doesn't stop it being undemanding and overpriced. You'll enjoy it loads (I did anyway), but you'll probably end up feeling cheated in the long-term.
58 PERCENT

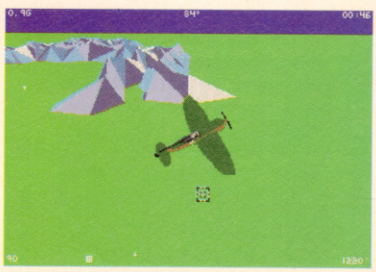
CHUCK YEAGAR'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0

Publisher	**Electronic Arts**
Price	**£24.99**
Programmer(s)	**Eldritch The Cat**
Release Date	**Out now**

A word of warning: step carefully if you come across a flight sim that warns you 'The program will continually access the disk during play'. From my experience of this one, they certainly aren't kidding.

Still, I suppose you're asking for it when you try to cram in as many options as this does. There's the selection of planes for instance – old Chuck certainly doesn't shortchange you here, offering a choice of 18, from Stealth bombers to the Space Shuttle. The accuracy of the flight models seems a little dubious – flying a Stealth seems suspiciously similar to flying a biplane – but the choice is admittedly impressive.

The options don't end there though. Slaloms, take-offs, landings, races, stunts, formation flying – the decisions you have to make before you take off go on and on. And on. Even when you're into the game proper there're internal and external camera views to pick between, starry backdrops (!) to add or remove, and all sorts. It has to be said though, all this flexibility does add to the game's appeal, which is just as well considering what the flying is like. You'll be amazed that a jet-engined plane can move this slowly. Yep, once again speed has been sacrificed for 3D detail and realism, and it mucks things up a treat. Jerky frame updates simply negate all the hard work put into the program. The strange cursor-style yoke control and slightly dodgy 3D don't help matters either. And then there's all that accessing...



Guiding a Spitfire through a canyon at just over 600ft is hard enough, but using an external view makes it nigh on impossible.

I don't wish to sound too negative though. If you can put up with the snooze-o-load (®) disk access and once-in-a-lifetime screen update (ie it updates once in a lifetime), this can actually get quite engrossing. Taking part in a 1940s slalom race is excellent fun, and the chance to land the Space Shuttle isn't to be sniffed at. The problem is, there are so many excellent flight sims on the market a new one has to be really special to make its mark, and this one isn't it. Now if only the whole thing moved two or three times faster...■ ***Mark Ramshaw***

THE BOTTOM LINE
Arguably one of the most flexible flight sims, packed with options and some fun scenarios. Unfortunately though, the whole thing fails to inspire due to the decidedly unfriendly pace.
57 PERCENT

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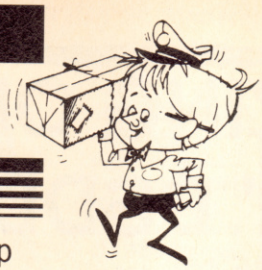

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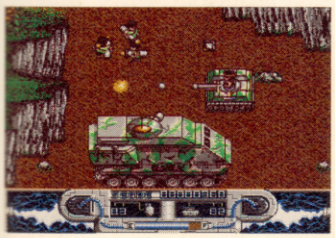
BLAZING THUNDER

Publisher **Hi-Tec**
Price **£6.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Unusually for Hi-Tec, this game isn't a licence from a dodgy Hanna-Barbera cartoon. It's actually a totally original product, in so much as something that's basically *Ikari Warriors* can be called 'original', though here the player is in a tank (or 'piece of miniature hardware', as the inlay would have it) instead of faffing about on foot. This of course immediately opens the door to lots of fun driving over enemy soldiers and listening to their



Hardware, shooting and explosions galore – it's got to be the frantic *Blazing Thunder*.

(differently-pitched!) screams, free from those 'bumping into things and dying' worries. Not that you're invulnerable, of course (bit of a silly game if you were, though it would probably still be loads of fun), as the enemy forces are armed to the teeth with a lot of rather heavier weaponry, including tanks, planes, helicopters, mobile rocket launchers and huge armoured personnel carriers.

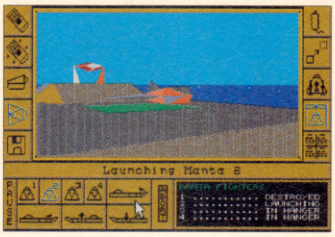
Hardly innovative stuff, you might be thinking (and you'd be right), but that doesn't stop *Blazing Thunder* from being a great little game. Faster-paced than is the norm for this kind of thing (and blessed with some great sound effects) it fairly cracks along through some effectively cartoony backdrops and heaps of action. It's as playable as you'd expect something this simple to be, and hard enough to be addictive too. Especially fun are some of the later landscapes which are often quite imaginative (if not to say decidedly odd) in design – worth looking out for. One word of warning – it's only half as much fun if your joystick doesn't autofire – but essentially we're in a moan-free zone here. A winner. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A really dinky budget game, and a must buy for all *Ikari* fans.
75 PERCENT

CARRIER COMMAND

Publisher **Mirror Image**
Price **£9.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Carrier Command was released in 1988. Last month it was rated number 15 in our own list of the Top 100 Amiga Games Of All Time. This should really tell you all you need to know, but in case you



Another Manta prepares for take-off, ready for a reconnoitre of the nearby islands.

missed the Top 100, or suffer from terminal dimness, here's a quick recap.

The first game of its type, and indeed arguably the only game of its type, *Carrier Command* defies pigeon-holing, but in essence it's a strategy wargame shoot-'em-up with elements of flight sim. You control a huge carrier, attack aircraft, and amphibious tanks in a battle to win control of a number of fictitious islands. The game is vast and totally absorbing, and the filled-vector graphics stand comparison with any more recent games in similar vein. There's enough flying and zapping to keep action fans in seventh heaven, but enough thinking to keep strategists scratching their heads for weeks too.

Everything about *Carrier Command* is fab, and now it'll only cost you a tenner. I really shouldn't be having to tell you this, you know. Get out there and buy it. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Are you still here? I said GET OUT THERE AND BUY IT!
89 PERCENT

CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS

Publisher **Code Masters**
Price **£6.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Code Masters have made something of a name for themselves as purveyors of cute, cartoony arcade games, so it comes as a bit of a surprise to find that *CJ's Elephant Antics* is in fact...a cute, cartoony arcade game. Okay, so it's not much of a surprise at all.

This particular cute cartoony arcade game concerns, in a rather ideologically sound manner, a baby elephant (*CJ*) who escapes from a plane while being transported to a zoo and has to travel through Europe and Africa to return to his home and family. Europe and Africa in this case consists of four large scrolling levels of maze-cum-platform action, with various enemies and traps conspiring to keep CJ from his objective, including gendarmes in France, lions in Africa, and penguins in Switzerland (?), as well as the ubiquitous end-of-level guardians.

The graphics in *CJ's Elephant Antics* have a slightly crude look to them, but CJ himself is a highly lovable little sprite, defending himself by spitting peanuts down his trunk at his adversaries and floating down long drops with the aid of his yellow-and-green umbrella. The screen scrolls smoothly in all directions, but in

CJ (he's the one with the trunk) in 'about to get horribly duffed up' situation.

general the game seems to lack a little in the way of visual sparkle. Musically it's atrocious, with a hideous tune that we'll mention no more lest I get all depressed, and there are no sound effects at all, which is a bit of a shame.

The two-player mode is very strange, as both players play simultaneously but the screen only follows player one, so close co-operation is essential if you want to get anywhere (alternatively, play the game completely blind for a real, not to mention very silly, challenge). Control could be a smidgen more sensitive too, but despite all these faults the game is actually very playable. With nine lives and only four levels (although they are very big levels) it won't take forever to complete, but it'll be long enough for you to get your money's worth. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Nothing special, sure, but a long way short of being totally crap too.
63 PERCENT

3D POOL

Publisher **Mirror Image**
Price **£9.99**
Release Date **Out now**

3D Pool. It's a pool game. It's in 3D. What else is there to say about it? Well, how about: 'It's a straightforward pool simulation, but instead of the traditional overhead view only format, the action can be viewed from anywhere around the table – from overhead or from cue level, zoomed in or out of, and generally mucked around with. It plays a mean game of pool too, with some seriously tough opponents, though with brilliant, precise, instinctive controls that mean you've still got a chance. The graphics are lovely, fast and smooth and the sound is as good as you could possibly expect it to be, with clicks, thuds, and appreciative applause for really good shots. It's got loads of options to increase lastability too, including one and two-player modes, tournament or practice games, and even a library of mindboggling trick shots to show off with, along with the

Erm, it's a pool table. With balls on it. Um...

option to set up your own ones (and re-live that incredible shot you pulled off down the pub last week). The whole thing has a very professional feel to it and proves ideal if what you really want to do is play pool without all that tedious faffing about buying drinks, bumping into people and getting smoke in your eyes. A bit groovy, all things considered'. You could always try saying something like that, I suppose. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE
If you like the idea of computer pool, an unmissable bargain. (Not everyone will of course).
77 PERCENT

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Publisher **Kixx**
Price **£7.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Despite sounding like a rather crap prehistoric monster movie starring Doug McClure, *Forgotten Worlds* is actually a well-respected shoot-'em-up from the arcades of 1989. You play a bloke with an aerosol can strapped onto his shoulders, flying around the air pumping holes into baddies who stream in at you from up, down and all around. It all plays out against a gently-rolling post-apocalyptic backdrop of blasted cities, 'dust worlds' and underwater seascapes, and as a conversion you have to say it's still pretty well spot-on. The graphics make for an appropriately eerie atmosphere, and the pace is fast and furious. In fact, it's so fast and furious it'll take you quite a while to catch up with it. The main faults are really those of the arcade, particularly the tricky control system (for the first hour you'll find yourself spinning round in circles faster than Michael Bareshnikov with a firework stuck up his bum), though once you get the hang of, say, pulling down left when you want your bloke to aim up right (like a kind of warped puppet on a string) you'll be blasting away fine and dandy.

Budget-priced horizontal blasters have rarely looked so good.

What irks me more is the way you die. Essentially you only have one life, with an energy bar that ebbs down bit by bit.This takes away any real feeling of danger – you tend to ignore the fact that you're getting hit until you keel over for seemingly no reason. *Forgotten Worlds* was never an incredibly innovative game but what it did it did well. And it still does. ■ *Andy Ide*

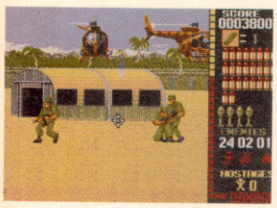
THE BOTTOM LINE
A fairly enjoyable, though slightly dated, arcade romp which benefits from a two-player mode.
73 PERCENT

OPERATION WOLF

Publisher **The Hit Squad**
Price **£7.99**
Release Date **Out now**

This is ideal budget fare really. A famous name (one of the most famous, in fact), limited gameplay but, it has to be said, lots of action. This is the original olive drab shooting gallery game, with oodles of enemy soldiers, tanks, jeeps, helicopters and the like leaping up or zooming out in front of you, and only your quick reactions saving you from being sent back to the title screen in an inglorious amount of time. It's the game the term 'genocidal' could have been invented for – admittedly the odd nurse, pig and Vietnamese-like civilian crops up who may not be such a brilliantly good idea to aim at – but the basic gameplay is very much of the shoot-everything-in-sight variety.

In a historical context *Op Wolf* is mainly noteable for the fact that it used such big, arcade-like sprites and had so many on the screen at one time – it looks a bit scrappy today perhaps, but you have to admit that it still works. Sufficiently similar to the coin-op to do it justice, it's really marred only by a tedious amount of disk swapping – surely it wouldn't have been too much effort to squeeze it all onto one disk? At this price it's a bit of a steal, and suddenly makes all similar rivals (*Line Of Fire* et al) still at 25 quid look stupidly priced indeed. We'd perhaps wait for the superior two-player sequel *Operation Thunderbolt* to make it onto budget, but there's no way you couldn't call this a good buy. ■ *Matt Bielby*



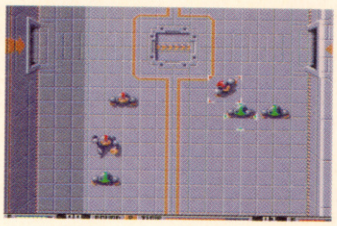
Facing ridiculous odds (and being shot to pieces), in *Operation Wolf*.

THE BOTTOM LINE
You know exactly what you're getting here and, within its limits, it doesn't really put a foot wrong.
72 PERCENT

SPEEDBALL

Publisher **Mirror Image**
Price **£9.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Clearly Mirrorsoft are hoping to capitalise on the massive success of *Speedball 2* with the re-release of this, its predecessor. The game follows the same basic principle but is simpler in most respects, with a smaller pitch, fewer players, and no management elements. Whereas *Speedball 2* was in essence a future soccer game, *S1* is more like five-a-side, with the action zipping from end to end with incredible regularity. The most interesting aspect is probably the bribery feature, where, by collecting tokens on the pitch, you can gather together enough cash to persuade the referee to give you a goal-lead at the start, or to extend the previously-finished game, giving you a


***Speedball* – it's not for the claustrophobic!**

chance to recover from a losing position. You can also use the tokens to increase your team's skills and stamina, or reduce those of the opposition. The gameplay itself is easy to pick up, and the graphics are the usual rather pretty metallic Bitmaps fare, but the sound is rather out-of-place, and would be much better suited to a shoot-'em-up. Generally the feel is of something nice, but a bit dated.

Speedball is a fun game, but in one-player mode it gets easy (and hence boring) very quickly. If you play in two-player mode it's brilliant, but then so are most two-player sports games. Mirror Image also seem to have rather misunderstood the concept of budget software, and pricing this game at £10 puts it rather too close to its vastly superior big brother for my liking. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A fine game, but (if you can afford it), you'll find *Speedball 2* is well worth the extra investment.
80 PERCENT

ROCKET RANGER

Publisher **Mirror Image**
Price **£9.99**
Release Date **Out now**

On the box of this game there's a quote which says '*Rocket Ranger* is...a real landmark in Amiga Software history', and for once they're right. When it first came out, *Rocket Ranger* featured probably the most stunning graphics ever seen on any home computer, and digitised music that gave the game a feel befitting the name of the company that produced it, Cinemaware. This was a piece of software that wasn't so much a game, more of an interactive movie (a term which has since become so overused as to be meaningless). But wait. Look back at that sentence. "Wasn't so much a game..." Doesn't that sound a bit wrong to you, isn't 'a game' exactly what it's supposed to be? And therein lies the problem with *Rocket Ranger*. On the surface it's absolutely gorgeous, but inside it's a gameplay-free zone. The sub-games which make it up are all pretty dire in their own right, despite the lovely graphics, and any simple fun that might have been had from it goes out of the window when you're confronted with half-a-dozen disk swaps every ten minutes. Some people love it – our own Gary Penn seems to think it's the bee's knees, for example – but I can't for the life of me see why. It's not all bad, if you've got a monumental degree of persistence you'll find a fair old strategy game in there, but frankly this is best bought as a piece of history, and of course to retain something's value as a relic, it's best if you don't ever take it out of the box... ■ *Stuart Campbell*

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? (etc)

THE BOTTOM LINE
***Rocket Ranger* is nice to have, but not something you'd be in a hurry to spend a tenner on.**
68 PERCENT

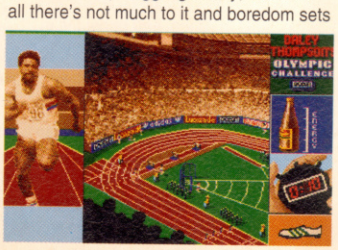
DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Publisher **The Hit Squad**
Price **£7.99**
Release Date **Out now**

Way back since the days of *Supertest* and the like on the Spectrum, Daley Thompson has had us frantically waggling our joysticks through many a sporting event. *Olympic Challenge* was the tie in with the last Olympics (so it's a re-release from 1988 then), and, despite all those fancy digitised graphics, training sessions and in between screens, underneath it's still just a plain old waggler.

Things start off (rather annoyingly every game) in the gym where the idea is to prepare yourself for the following events. There are three exercises for you to try (or should that be hurt?) your hand at – weight lifting, sit ups and squats. Here, a nice digitised piccy of the big D himself does all the lifting, sitting up and squatting for you whilst you (yep you guessed it) waggle away feverishly, hopefully filling up that bottle of Lucozade at the top of the screen (as it will apparently effect your performance in the events).

The usual running, jumping and throwing Decathlon events come next, featuring nice graphics, but unfortunately rather one sided gameplay – you simply weld your joystick to the floor, superglue your hand to the shaft, make lots of groaning noises and waggle for your life. Some of the events (if you get that far - you have to qualify in each one to get onto the next) involve such complicated manoeuvres as pressing fire to jump and (shock horror) waggling slowly, but all in all there's not much to it and boredom sets in extremely quickly. There's no way of practising each event either, so you're bound to spend most of your time training and very little on the actual competitions themselves. What a downer, eh? Three years on, *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge* still has a bit of instant appeal, but soon gets very repetitive and boring. There are a lot better ways to spend eight quid. ■ *Rich Pelley*



Hopelessly old fashioned and, um, that's it.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Hopelessly old fashioned waggling gameplay. Even the great man's face on the box won't help it sell.
55 PERCENT

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

Publisher **Mirror Image**
Price **£9.99**
Release Date **Out now**

One of the Amiga's very first flight sims, *Strike Force Harrier* was also one of the best received. Combining realistic simulation with lots of fast blasting action, it remains one of the genre's most playable games, and for outright speed can give anything currently available a real run for its money.

Obviously there's going to be a drawback. Flight sims have progressed quite a way in the three or so years since its original release, and *Strike Force Harrier* now appears pretty crude and primitive graphically, lacking depth when compared to more recent games. But all the same, if you treat it more as something like *Rescue On Fractalus* and play it like a complicated shoot-'em-up rather than a simple flight sim, you'll probably find yourself having quite a lot of fun. Priced at £10 though, it's unavoidably going to attract unfavourable comparisons with *F/A-18 Interceptor*, which is technically miles ahead, and available for the same price. The EA game is just as accessible, and much more impressive technically (as its placing in our All-Time Top 100 would suggest) so in a straight head-to-head, *Strike Force Harrier* is always going to come out second best. With that in mind, I can't really recommend it strongly, but my gut feeling is that it's a really nice game, and one that's just a bit more enjoyable to play than the usual flight sim. ■ *Stuart Campbell*

Pyramids? This isn't Egypt is it?

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's pretty fine, but at the price it's been rather out-evolved by *F/A-18*. Do take a look though.
64 PERCENT

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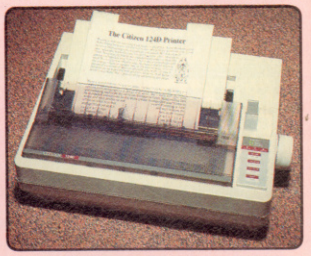

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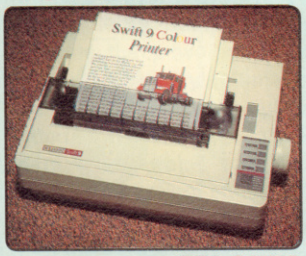

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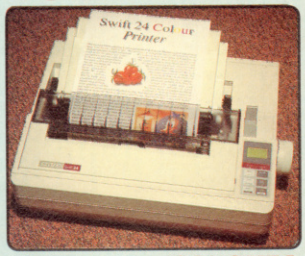

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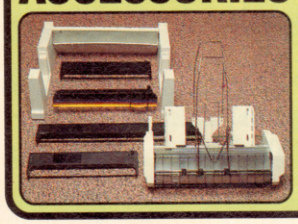

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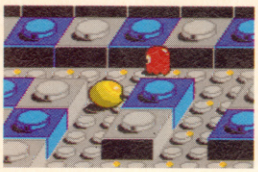
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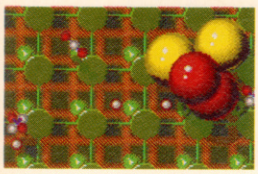
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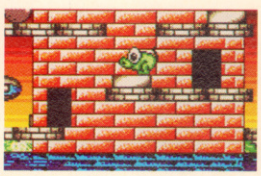
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Now for the difficult bit. First check out the questions below. Then answer them (pretty obvious so far, isn't it?) on the back of an envelope or post card, and send it off to Amiga Power Top 100 Competition, Amiga Power, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Don't forget to add your name and address (print clearly please), and make sure you get it to us by May 24th 1991.

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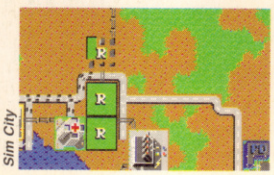
SO WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

It's simple really. You just have to answer the Top 100 related questions below. There are a few of them, but don't worry, if you don't know some of the answers they can be found either inside this very copy of the magazine or in the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100 Games supplement (available with this month's Amiga Format).

1. The music to *Xenon 2* is based on the theme from what low budget movie?
2. How is *Leisure Suit Larry III* subtitled?
3. *Shanghai* is loosely based on what ancient Chinese game?
4. Name two other games (not necessarily on the Amiga) by *Laser Squad* creator Julian Gollop.
5. What industry 'cult' character wrote the introductory poem to *Castle Master*?
6. *Rainbow Islands* is the sequel to what game?
7. Which flight sim might be hard to track down in your local computer shop?
8. What's the name of *Warhead* creator Glyn Williams' soon-to-be completed new game?
9. What is the name of the programmer of Firebird's *Quartz*?
10. *Captive* is essentially a modern update of what game?


Sim City

Rocket Ranger

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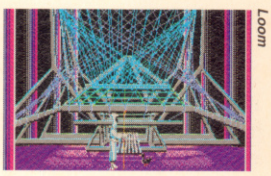
Loom

Elite

Klax

Midwinter

Buggy Boy

RULES & REGULATIONS.

- **The closing date for the competition is May 24th 1991. Any entries received after that will be filed in the bin.**
- **We reserve the right to replace any game from the Top 100 that is no longer available with an equivalent game.**
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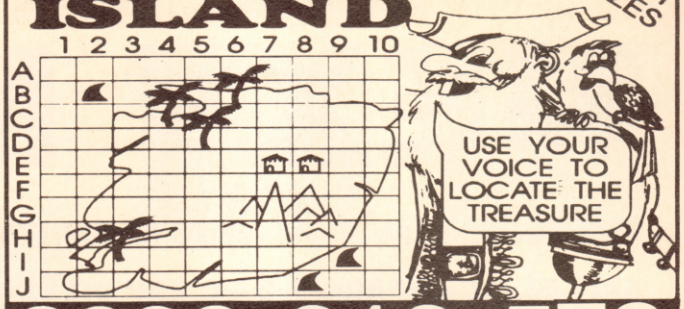

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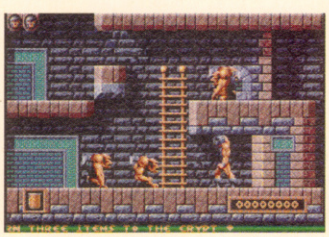

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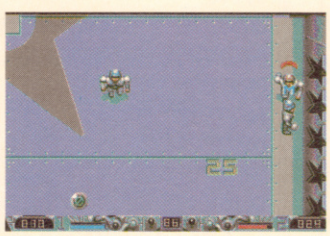

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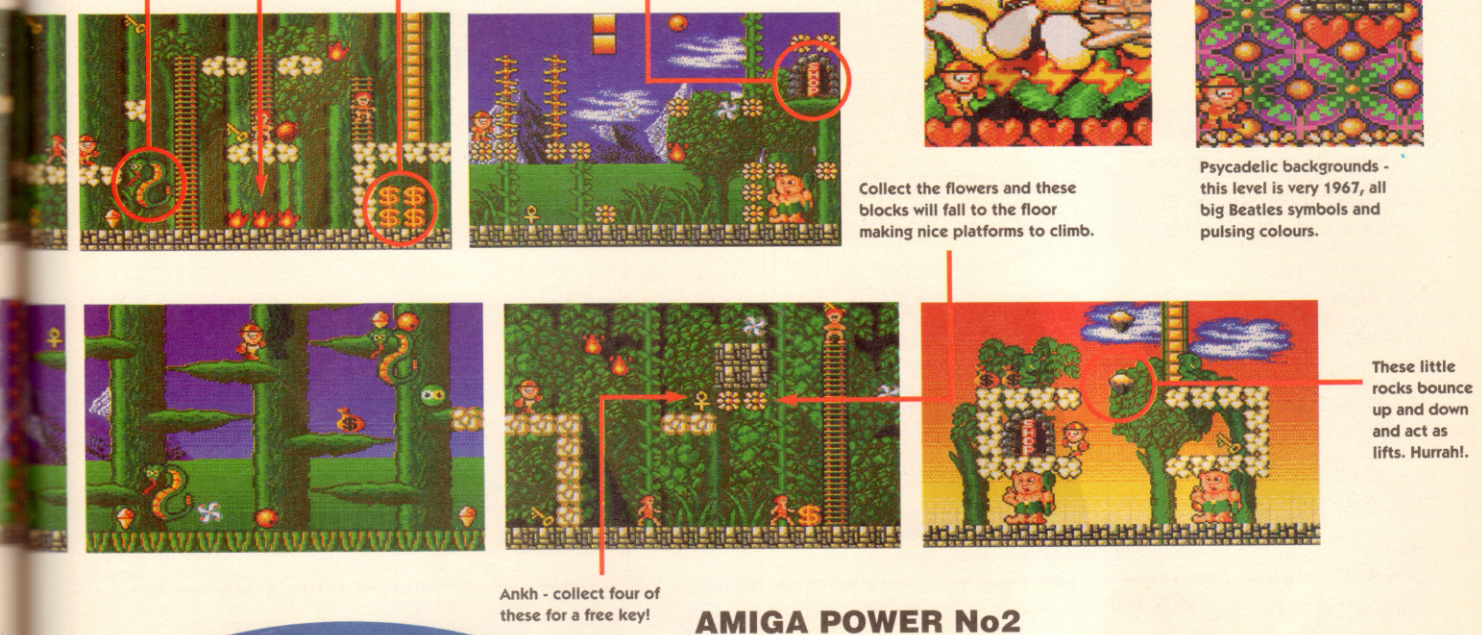

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Empire £24.99

Uppers – Old fashioned platform gameplay still holds up well. ***Downers*** – Tiny sprites and – let's face it – it all looks rather crap when you first see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun, but do you really want to fork out 25 quid for what's basically a crumbly old 8-bit game? ★★

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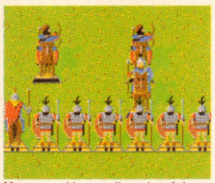


Uppers – Unusually colourful graphics for a wargame, reasonable game mechanics and compatibility with Rainbird's *UMS*. ***Downers*** – Poor cursor control; not terribly state-of-the-art. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine if you like toy soldiers. ★★

ANTAGO

Art Of Dreams £19.95

Uppers – Cute and charming little *Othello/Checkers* hybrid. ***Downers*** – A bit twee; not much lasting interest. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only really comes alive in two player mode. ★

A PREHISTORIC TALE

Thalion £24.99

Uppers – At first appears to be a basic platform and ladders thingie but you soon realise it's actually got a bit more depth. ***Downers*** – But only a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – Functional and (to be honest) rather monotonous. ★

ARMADA

ARC £29.95

Uppers – Arc's enticing 3D wargame system, and an unusual subject. ***Downers*** – The whole thing fails to generate any excitement and comes across as very superficial. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you love wargames, stick with the standard fare. If you don't, avoid it anyway. ★★

ATF II

Digital Integration £24.99

Uppers – Good old-fashioned 3D fly-and-shoot game with the added attraction of solid vector graphics. ***Downers*** – It's no flight sim. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun as far as it goes. ★★

ATOMIC ROBOKID

Activision £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of levels, plenty of action. ***Downers*** – Not particularly fast (and certainly not new!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable straightforward shoot-'em-up in the 'son of *R-Type*' vein. ★★

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Variety, neat animation, some decent jokes. ***Downers*** – But film licences nearly always feel too thin to be worth 25 quid... ***The Bottom Line*** – ...and this one's no different. Fun but slight. ★★

BADLANDS

Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

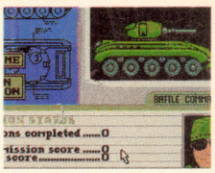
B.A.T.

Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Intergalactic intrigue in a novel interactive comic book style. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too left-of-centre for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very different, and actually very good. ★★★

BATTLE COMMAND

Ocean £24.99



Uppers – Loads of missions, atmospheric solid 3D graphics (ie lots of green), plus a good mix of strategy and blasting. ***Downers*** – Takes a while to get into; some odd (and impossible to complete) missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the self-discipline to persevere past an uninspiring start, this is a worthy follow-up to the classic *Carrier Command*. ★★★

BATTLEMASTER

PSS £29.99

Uppers – A tired fantasy/strategy plot given new lease of life by excellent graphics and oodles of playability. ***Downers*** – Arcade junkies need not apply, despite the abundance of genocidal mayhem. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try it – you may be surprised. ★★★

BETRAYAL

Rainbird £29.99

Uppers – Fantasy blended with strategy and some nice graphical touches offers an intriguing hybrid. ***Downers*** – The game really needs several human players to make it exciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Rainbird attempt something a little bit different. ★★★

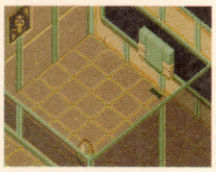
BLOCK OUT

Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – Initially similar to *Welltris*, but far more challenging due to the true use of 3D. ***Downers*** – If *Tetris* (and its ilk) made you scream, playing *Block Out* is not medically advisable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Compulsive. ★★★

BOTICS

Krisalis £19.99



Uppers – Nice sound; futuristic graphics. ***Downers*** – Absolutely dire *Pong*-style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Get out of here! ★

BREACH 2

Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

CABAL

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly enjoyable *Operation Wolf* varient. ***Downers*** – Kindergarten graphics and no game depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable two-player blasting for an hour or three. ★★

CADAVER

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking. ***Downers*** – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CAPTIVE

Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Neat icon-control system enhances an atmospheric (and massive) exploration challenge. ***Downers*** – The game system is quite similar to *Dungeon Master*, so joystick freaks won't find much to enjoy here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A genuine Amiga classic. ★★★★

CARTHAGE

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Excellent graphics and some nifty arcade sequences. ***Downers*** – But underneath it's a distinctly average strategy game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite appearances, not one for the joystick junkies out there. ★★★

CAR-VUP

Core Design £24.99

Uppers – As cute a game as you are ever likely to find, and with a perfectly balanced difficulty level too. ***Downers*** – It's pretty simple – more variety between the levels would've been nice. ***The Bottom Line*** – It might not push back the boundaries of Amiga leisure software, but it's a damn fine game. ★★★★

CASTLE MASTER

Incentive (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Improved 3D Freescape system, and a new medieval environment in which to solve a dazzling array of puzzles. ***Downers*** – Not the prettiest game ever, and not really that different from the rest of the Freescape series. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great if you're a fan, others will wonder what all the fuss is about. ★★★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

CHASE HQ II

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well, it's not as disastrous as the first conversion. ***Downers*** – But still terminally average. It drives like a brick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It looks as tired as Miami Vice. ★★

CHIP'S CHALLENGE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of levels; typically well thought out console-style gameplay. ***Downers*** – Simplistic graphics; lack of depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but not the most characterful of puzzle games. ★★★

CODENAME: ICEMAN

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Good if you've always fancied a submarine simulator bolted onto Sierra's usual graphic adventure engine. ***Downers*** – Five disks of slow-motion action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not Sierra's best, and a poor introduction to their game style. ★★

THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Mildly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. ***Downers*** – Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced and over here. ★★

COMBO RACER

Gremlin £19.99

Uppers – Ultra-fast 3D and a track designer up the longevity of the game. ***Downers*** – Naff sound and a totally ridiculous two-player option. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks sparkle, but it's far from being a disaster. ★★

COMMANDO

Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. ***Downers*** – As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classic stuff. ★★★

CONQUEROR

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Brilliantly-designed, with the same gorgeous display system as *Virus*. ***Downers*** – Maybe a little too tactical for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Highly under-rated. ★★★

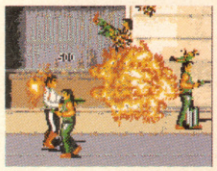
CRACKDOWN

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Superlative conversion of the arcade original. ***Downers*** – A bit limited in one-player mode. ***The Bottom Line*** – Offers nothing new. ★★

CRIME WAVE

US Gold £24.95



Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers*** – The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is monstrous. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CYBERBALL

Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – An excellent conversion of an utterly bizarre coin-op. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of long-term interest; can be difficult to get into. ***The Bottom Line*** – Novel, but ultimately boring. ★★

DAMOCLES

Novagen £24.99

Uppers – Excellent use of solid

Enter a computer shop and you're going to be faced with more games than we could possibly review this issue. A lot more. And that causes a bit of problem – how exactly *do* you tell a must-buy item from a piece of inexcusable junk? Well, with The Bottom Line of course, our at-a-glance guide to every (or almost every) full price Amiga game released over the past year. Each month we'll update the reviews, adding new ones and throwing some of the older games out, to bring you your essential guide to everything you're ever likely to buy. To keep things simple we've dispensed with the normal scoring system and rated everything out of five stars.

★★★★★ Exceptional
★★★★★ Nearly there
★★★★ Very good
★★★ Has its moments
★★ Flawed
★ Dire

THE BOTTOM LINE

3D graphics to depict a play area spanning a whole solar system. ***Downers*** – The exploration and puzzle solving concept has already been used extensively in *Mercenary* et al. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Mercenary* with filled-in graphics – Paul Woakes fans will play it for months. ★★★

DAN DARE III

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Nice loading sequence. ***Downers*** – Unfortunately the whole thing goes downhill from there. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great on 8-bit, but Amiga owners should buy reprints of the comic instead. ★★

DEATH TRAP

Anco £24.99

Uppers – Unusual mix of horizontally-scrolling arcade adventure and magic. ***Downers*** – Naff scrolling and poor sound mar the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – A refreshingly playable game. ★★

DEFENDER II

ARC £24.99

Uppers – *Defender*, *Defender II* and *Stargate* all in one package – the action never lets up. ***Downers*** – Only purists will appreciate the archaic graphics, one or two essential features are omitted, and the *Defender II* game is duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't judge it by appearances alone – every home should have one. ★★★★

DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH

Hi-Tec was £19.99, now at £6.99

Uppers – Suitably cartoon-like graphics. ***Downers*** – Vapid and trashy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just like the TV show in fact. ★★

DISTANT ARMIES

Exocet £24.99

Uppers – Ten different variations of chess, all in one package. Nice graphics, tons of background information. ***Downers*** – Definitely for chess-heads only. ***The Bottom Line*** – The ideal present for the cerebral Amiga owner. ★★★

DRAGON BREED

Activision £24.99

Uppers – A near perfect arcade conversion; niftily animated main dragon sprite. ***Downers*** – The zillionth sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up of last year. ***The Bottom Line*** – One instinctively knows when a conversion is right. ★★★★

DRAGONFLIGHT

Thalion £34.99

Uppers – Elegantly designed, perfectly executed fantasy RPG. ***Downers*** – If only it wasn't such a tired old genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – Over-priced, unspectacular, but (let's be fair) still reasonable fun. ★★★

DRAGON FORCE

Interstel £29.99

Uppers – Nice strategy combat sim, not unlike *Laser Squad*. ***Downers*** – Seriously average graphics and a limited number of missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tries hard to reach the dizzy heights of the *Squad* (and just falls short). ★★★

DRAGONS OF FLAME

SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers*** – A bit simplistic for real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II

Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics. ***Downers*** – Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best value game in the world. ★★

DRIVIN' FORCE

Digital Magic £24.95

Uppers – *Powerdrift*-style gameplay, ie. bloody fast graphics. 25 different tracks. ***Downers*** – Naff vehicle control gives no impression of driving whatsoever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try out *Indy 500* instead. ★★

DYNASTY WARS

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – A beat-'em-up with horses and distinctly Japanese graphics. Neat. ***Downers*** – Pity about the sound and limited gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – A road of clap. ★★

DYTER 07

Reline £19.99

Uppers – An instantly playable blast from the past in the guise of a *Choplifter* clone. ***Downers*** – As predictable as the front page of The Sun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Sorry, wrong decade. ★★

ECO PHANTOMS

Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Atmospheric alien-style graphics and complex, multi-faceted gameplay give it a totally original feel. ***Downers*** – Despite the plot and shiny exterior it lacks excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Different, but not a vital game by any means. ★★★

EDD THE DUCK

Impulze £24.99

Uppers – *Rainbow Islands*-inspired gameplay ensures some level of interest. ***Downers*** – But the whole thing just doesn't inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for a young audience. ***The Bottom Line*** – Your granny might buy you one. ★★

ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Elvira's gorgeous; the graphics really draw the player in. ***Downers*** – Pity the game itself is nigh on impossible – and it takes five disks! ***The Bottom Line*** – Falls apart due to gratuitous disk swapping and infuriating gameplay. ★★

EMLYN HUGHES' ARCADE QUIZ

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Just like a pub quiz machine... ***Downers*** – ...but with Emlyn Hughes in it (and no real cash prizes). ***The Bottom Line*** – Oh dear. ★

EMLYN HUGHES' INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – A wide range of moves and more options than Menu Master. ***Downers*** – Utterly unplayable and awkward. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have to be a crazy horse to buy this one. ★★

E-MOTION

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – Weird graphics and mindboggling gameplay set *E-Motion* apart from just about any other game. ***Downers*** – The whole concept may prove difficult to get your mind around. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you can handle the basic idea *E-Motion* offers many joyous hours of swearing and frustration. ★★★★★

ESWAT

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – As conversions go, it's not a complete nightmare... ***Downers*** – ...but let's be honest, the arcade original was duff, duff, duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game. ★

EVERTON FC INTELLIGENCIA

AMFAS £19.95

Uppers – A footie fanatic's dream – a trivia quiz based on our national pastime. ***Downers*** – Haven't I answered that question two thousand times already? ***The Bottom Line*** – Ridiculous title, stupid concept. If you see it, burn it. ★

EXTERMINATOR

Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers*** – Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

5TH GEAR

Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Erm, it's from Hewson. That's its redeeming feature. ***Downers*** – The game itself is a pretty pointless scrolling driving game (ie it's a disaster). ***The Bottom Line*** – Oh dear. ★

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Strategy and accuracy combine to bring a fresh edge to an over-populated genre. Hide, strike and run away! ***Downers*** – If you're good it can get dull, as no one knows you're there! ***The Bottom Line*** – Damn fine simulation. ★★★★

F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A great value flight sim, with some of the most spectacular graphics yet. ***Downers*** – Several bugs can severely irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the most accessible Amiga flight sims to date. Excellent stuff. ★★★

FINAL BATTLE

PSS £24.99

Uppers – Nice 3D isometric graphics; a sequel completely unlike its predecessor. ***Downers*** – The game is rendered unplayable by the impenetrable control system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Flawed. ★★

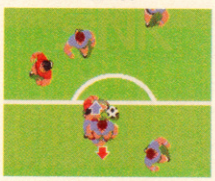
FIGHTER BOMBER

Activision £24.99

Uppers – Some of the best 3D polygon graphics yet in a flight sim. ***Downers*** – At a fraction of the speed of *F29*. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's not bad. It's just that there are better, faster and more exciting flight sims around. ★★

FIGHTING SOCCER

Activision £24.99



Uppers – The coin-op was mildly amusing(ish). ***Downers*** – You are accused of producing an utterly dull game of the lowest calibre. How do you plead? ***The Bottom Line*** – Guilty as hell. ★

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Excellent *Ghosts 'N' Goblins*-inspired medieval romp, spiced up by the addition of puzzles. ***Downers*** – Not the most original or modern game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Neato. ★★★

FLOOD

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Climbing the walls and ceilings gives a new slant on the usual platform game; weapons are fun. ***Downers*** – Slow gameplay and there's not really that much going on. Colour is unusually dull for a cute game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a while but nothing special. ★★★

THE FOOL'S ERRAND

Miles Computing £24.95

Uppers – A puzzle game with real lastability – 80 problems to get your brain aching. ***Downers*** – Underneath the gloss, a fairly average game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just okay. ★★

FUTURE BASKETBALL

Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Fast, violent, exciting and well presented mayhem. ***Downers*** – The poor man's *Speedball 2*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't have the depth of the Bitmaps' classic, but enormous fun all the same. ★★★

GALAXY FORCE II

Activision £24.99

Uppers – An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. ***Downers*** – Everything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you know you can't do it why bother trying? ★

GARFIELD – THE WINTER'S TAIL

The Edge £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant Jim Davis graphics. ***Downers*** – Crappy Steve Davis gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only. ★

GAZZA II

Empire £24.99

Uppers – Gazza doesn't actually appear in the game much. ***Downers*** – Juddering sprites, poor control (just like the man himself), terrible sound – take your pick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's enough to reduce you to tears. ★

GHENGHIS KHAN

Infogrames £39.99

Uppers – Stylish and fairly deep historical strategy game. ***Downers*** – Ridiculously expensive though, and requires a fair dose of manual reading. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bit of a cliché, but 'good if you like that sort of thing.' ★★★

GOLDEN AXE

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Perfect arcade conversion, with every last feature implemented. ***Downers*** – There never really was a lot of variation in the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Visually stunning, but not different enough to separate it from the usual beat-'em-up. ★★★

THE GOLD OF THE AZTECS

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – The animation gives the hero real character for once, and each screen is a separate challenge. Loads of nice touches. ***Downers*** – The control is a tad awkward until you get used to it. ***The Bottom Line*** – A simpler game than it first appears, but nonetheless a totally absorbing one. ★★★★

GRAND NATIONAL

Elite £19.99

Uppers – A good bit of horsing around for an hour or so. ***Downers*** – More depth than a very, very shallow puddle. It doesn't really compete in today's market. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elite really should know better than to serve up third rate games like this. Give the twenty quid to the RSPCA instead. ★

GRAND PRIX MASTER

Dinamic £19.95

Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers*** – Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GRAVITY

Mirrorsoft £24.95

Uppers – Startlingly original graphics, gameplay, concept and just about everything else really. ***Downers*** – Maybe a bit too weird for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Free your mind, and your ass will follow. A cult classic. ★★★

GREMLINS II

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Cute as hell, with graphics and sound nigh on perfect. ***Downers*** – It really is far too difficult. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good film licence. ★★★

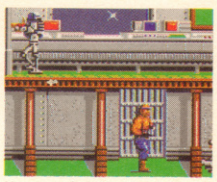
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

Elite £19.99

Uppers – As close a coin-op conversion as you could possibly hope for. ***Downers*** – Mind you, it is a bit on the ancient side. ***The Bottom Line*** – Who cares about modern when a game is this good? ★★★

HAMMERFIST

Vivid Image (Activision) £24.99



Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARD DRIVIN' II

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Refined version of the original – less bugs, a track editor, a neat 'head-to-head' option if you link two machines... ***Downers*** – ...but still glitchy and not a patch on the arcade machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – Souped up, but not souped up enough. ★★

HARLEY DAVIDSON

Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Slick as oil, with lots of neat touches to put you into Easy Rider mode. ***Downers*** – The actual game is uninspiring and repetitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Born to be mild. ★

HEAVY METAL

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Good presentation, the three arcade sections threaded together with a smattering of strategy. ***Downers*** – The action sequences are a bit

shoddy, and the sound is pitiful. ***The Bottom Line*** – An uneven game which fails to hold the interest. ★★

HELTER SKELTER

Audiogenic £19.99

Uppers – Highly original gameplay; password system greatly increases addictiveness; great cartoon sound effects. ***Downers*** – Extremely tricky control method which is difficult to use even with practice. Gets samey after a while. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dubious lasting appeal, but a fun little game if you fancy something a bit different. ★★★

HERE WITH THE CLUES

CRL £24.95

Uppers – Highly original concept (a computerised whodunit) with excellent use of digitised graphics. ***Downers*** – Solving murders won't appeal to all. ***The Bottom Line*** – A step in the right direction. ★★★

HIGHWAY PATROL II

Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Fairly convincing 3D road graphics; lots of shiny sports cars. ***Downers*** – There's not a lot to do. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ho hum. Averageville, Arizona here we come. ★★

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT

Millenium £24.99

Uppers – Unusual idea; suitably spooky graphics. ***Downers*** – But let down by the dull platform nature of the game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Funny to watch, but fairly average to play. ★★

HOT ROD

Activision £24.99

Uppers – Genuine arcade-style graphics... ***Downers*** – ...but not from this century. ***The Bottom Line*** – Makes *Badlands* look like a classic. ★★

IMPERIUM

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – As vast as they come, with more twiddly strategy bits than you could reasonably hope for. ***Downers*** – Mac-style graphics look dull, and the whole game lacks any visual sparkle. ***The Bottom Line*** – One for dedicated strategy-heads only. *Supremacy* fans might dig it. ★★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – More fine-tuning gives Indy the friendliest control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! ***Downers*** – Waiting for Indy to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite simply the best Amiga adventure to date. ★★★★

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Hewson £24.99

Uppers – It's funny (but for all the wrong reasons). ***Downers*** – It stinks like a sweaty leotard. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bigger farce than the sport itself. A decent wrestling game has yet to be written.★

IMMORTAL, THE

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A game which makes real use of 1 meg memory... ***Downers*** – ...which means most Amiga owners will never see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best fantasy arcade adventure by any means, but the gorgeous graphics lift it well above average. ★★★

IMPOSSAMOLE

Gremlin £19.99

Uppers – There's nothing really wrong with it.... ***Downers*** – ...but the whole thing is just so forgettable. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Impossamole?* What's that? ★

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts £24.95

Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous.

INFESTATION

Psygnosis £24.95

Uppers – Very Alien-esque atmosphere. Watch that blood pressure rise! ***Downers*** – Harder to get into than an Ingmar Bergman film.***The Bottom Line*** – Persevere and you'll find a pretty top-notch 3D adventure. ★★★

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Soccer in 3D? A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game-style... ***Downers*** – ...which unfortunately falls flat on its face. ***The Bottom Line*** – Foul. ★

INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Novel use of 3D polygon graphics, with fluid animation and nine camera angles. ***Downers*** – Its attempt to re-create the feel of tennis isn't entirely successful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very good, but it's got stiff competition from the likes of *Pro Tennis Tour 2*. ★★★

IRON LORD

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

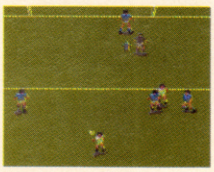
ISHIDO

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Take Othello, add some Go, then throw in a few herbs and spices and heat until brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called *Ishido*. ***Downers*** – Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate.***The Bottom Line*** – An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea. ★★

ITALY 90

US Gold £24.99



Uppers – A wealth of teams and players; reasonable in-game graphics. ***Downers*** – Crap sound effects, and the action doesn't really grab like it should. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable soccer bash, but frankly it's last year's game. ★★★

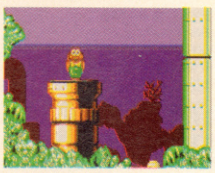
IVANHOE

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Simply unbelievable graphics and cartoon animation (we saw them and still don't believe them). ***Downers*** – Far too easy to complete. ***The Bottom Line*** – Next time can we have a game supplied with our pretty pictures, please? ★★

JAMES POND

Millennium £24.99



Uppers – It's slicker than a pot of Brylcreem, with beautifully simple gameplay to instantly hook the unsuspcting player. ***Downers*** – Lacks any real adrenalin-pumping qualities. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loads of initial cute appeal, but really a pretty run-of-the-mill arcade runabout. ★★★

JUDGE DREDD

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

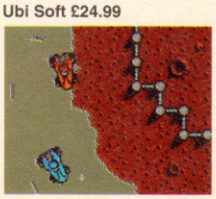
JUMPING JACK SON

Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Stupendous music, instant addiction, cute graphics. ***Downers*** – Severely limited in the lastability department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great show-case for the Amiga, but a bit average playability-wise. ★★

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Ubi Soft £24.99



Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

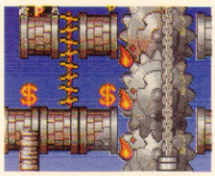
KICK OFF 2

Anco £19.99

Uppers – The same great features as *Kick Off 1* plus better goalies. ***Downers*** – Those better goalies (it can prove very hard to score). ***The Bottom Line*** – The definitive footie game (even if a suspiciously high proportion of people find it all but uncontrollable).

KID GLOVES

Millennium £24.99



Uppers – Graphics which out-cute *Rainbow Islands*, the world's first addictive intro screen and an almost unrivalled degree of 'feel' . ***Downers*** – The simplistic flick-screen platform format doesn't appeal to everyone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Huge amounts of fun, but no brain strain. Play it after *Klax* to relax yourself. ★★★

THE KILLING GAME SHOW

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Straightforward fun game sharing some aspects of gameplay with *Rainbow Islands*. The interactive replay feature is interesting, innovative, and useful. ***Downers*** – The usual Psygnosis metallic graphics don't really suit; it gets a bit too complicated for its own good later on, detracting from the simplicity that initially makes it so addictive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite unusually poor graphics, this is one of Psygnosis' best and most playable games to date. ★★★

KLAX

Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – More scope than *Tetris*, better looking and sounding too; deceptive pace means it gets pretty frantic without you really noticing. ***Downers*** – Not for the slow-witted. If you don't have a naturally calm nature you'll chuck it out the window within minutes. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real mind-wrencher and a near perfect conversion. ★★★★

KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALLION

US Gold £29.99

Uppers – HAM mode graphics, haunting sound and a real game to boot. ***Downers*** – Not one to simply load and go. ***The Bottom Line*** – One for fans of every genre, and a good demonstration of the machine's capabilities. ★★★

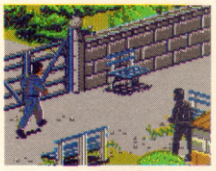
LANCASTER

Actual Screenshots £24.95

Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics; an unusual approach to a WWII sim. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LAST NINJA 2

System 3 £24.99



Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. Lemmings rule.

LINE OF FIRE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back on fast-forward, and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. ***Downers*** – You also have a pretty good idea of how intelligent it is. ***The Bottom Line*** – An impossible arcade conversion proves totally and utterly impossible. ★★

LOOM

Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Great atmosphere, enhanced by the accompanying tape, booklets etc. It's certainly a lavish package. ***Downers*** – An adventure without typing? It certainly won't appeal to purists, and the 'audio drama' is laughable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Lucasfilm strive for something different. The results are interesting, if not totally successful. ★★★

LOST PATROL

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Graphics are nothing short of stunning. ***Downers*** – Unfortunately the game itself is incredibly tedious (if you can actually find any in there). ***The Bottom Line*** – Atmospheric but lacking any playability. One for Vietnam obsessives only. ★★

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – A wealth of control options lets you make the game more arcadey or simulationy according to preference. Bags of 'feel'. ***Downers*** – The other cars are a bit flat-looking, and half the screen is wasted in one-player mode. (You don't appear to be able to turn the annoying music off either). ***The Bottom Line*** – An extremely good driving game, even more fun with two players. ★★★★

MAGIC FLY

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Very challenging. ***Downers*** – But not too thrilling, and who wants wireframe 3D in 1991? ***The Bottom Line*** – You may not find it worth all the bother of getting into it. ★★

MANHUNTER 2

Sierra (Activision) £29.99

Uppers – More exciting than normal for this type of game. ***Downers*** – Badly-judged puzzles, awful graphics, and the arcade sequences are execrable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dire game at a scandalous price. ★

MANIC MINER

Software Projects £9.99

Uppers – Pixel-perfect copy of the 8-bit original (just right for nostalgia buffs) plus a pretty new scrolling version with extras for those who like to see their Amiga at work; plays as gorgeously as it always did. ***Downers*** – Awful sound on both versions, and clearly not everyone is going to want to see an 8-year-old game on their brand new 16-bit wonder machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – You're not going to buy it if you didn't like the original, but if you did you'll be in seventh heaven. ★★★★

MANIX

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Charmingly surreal. ***Downers*** – But it's just an updated *Q-Bert* really, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line*** – Never really gets its hooks into you. ★★

MASTERBLAZER

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action – all in all a respectable updating of the original future-sport game. ***Downers*** – Despite the new features, *Masterblazer* looks and feels dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal. ★★★

MEAN STREETS

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Many different styles combine well for (ahem) a wide-ranging gameplay experience. ***Downers*** – Dragged down by disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good solid entertainment. A bit like Lenny Henry, really. ★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty

curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. ***Downers*** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. ***The Bottom Line*** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIDWINTER
Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Vast as something that is very vast indeed, with loads of strategy bits, and some very nice 3D indeed. ***Downers*** – Occasional pockets of boredom tend to break the tension; apparently very easy to complete if you know how. ***The Bottom Line*** – Mike Singleton finally brings his classic *Lords of Midnight* up to date. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. ***Downers*** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. ★

MIG-29
Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. ***Downers*** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

M1 TANK PLATOON
MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Cheaper than a real tank. ***Downers*** – Needs a lot of perseverance. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as much fun as actually having a tank platoon on the M1. ★★

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Some genuinely funny humour, captures the style of the TV show without just rehashing it. ***Downers*** – Basic gameplay is pretty, erm, basic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still fun after you've seen all the jokes. ★★★

MOONWALKER
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Pleasantly spaced-out scenario. ***Downers*** – Where can we start? Abysmal graphics, monumentally tedious gameplay, generally crap everything. ***The Bottom Line*** – Spend the money on a nose job instead. ★

MR. DO RUN RUN
Electrocoin £14.99

Uppers – Totally addictive conversion of an arcade toughie from way back. Old-fashioned gameplay from the days when you couldn't bury crap underneath a load of pretty graphics and hype. ***Downers*** – You may think the single-screen format looks boring. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you like to see the Amiga used to its full potential, steer well clear. If on the other hand you like your games to be fun it'll suit you fine. ★★★

MUDS
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Quite funny. ***Downers*** – Do we really need another rugby/basketball/ violence-based future sport? ***The Bottom Line*** – Giving everything silly names doesn't make this game different to the dozen others it's just the same as. ★★

MURDER
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Highly atmospheric black-and-white look. ***Downers*** – Repetitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got plenty of patience, it's an absorbing brain-teaser. ★★★

MYSTICAL
Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – Fresh graphical approach to the the usual fantasy scenario. ***Downers*** – Really badly-thought-out two-player mode. ***The Bottom Line*** – An uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. ★★

'NAM
Domark £24.95

Uppers – Heavily researched, convincing and (dirty word) educational strategic war game. ***Downers*** – Very hard to win, the whole serious look to the thing could be a turn off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new dimension to war games. ★★★★

NARC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great blood-spattering action; very close to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Very dodgy on the playability front (not to say morally). ***The Bottom Line*** – Limited. ★★

NARCO POLICE
Dinamic £24.99

Uppers – Looks excellent. ***Downers*** – Computer takes a 'creative' attitude towards obeying control commands. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loud and action-packed blaster for expert commandos. ★★

NEBULUS
Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Truly innovative gameplay and graphics which wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. The climb up/fall down routine makes it almost too addictive for safety. ***Downers*** – Not for softies – some could find this just too frustrating. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classically simple design makes for a game that won't let go once it gets its hooks into you (which will be about two minutes after you pick it up). ★★★★

NEUROMANCER
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – The only contender in its field. ***Downers*** – That doesn't make it any good, though. ***The Bottom Line*** – None of the atmosphere of the book. Not so much Chiba City as Average City. ★★

NIGHT SHIFT
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically innovative and full of character. ***Downers*** – Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual platforms are; more time spent loading than playing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A few instructions would work wonders, but the game's overwhelming charm pulls it through. ★★★

NEW YORK WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Reasonably atmospheric, undemanding blaster. ***Downers*** – Oh God, *Ikari Warriors Part 844194365408354*. ***The Bottom Line*** – You can buy much better, cheaper. ★

NINE LIVES
ARC £24.99

Uppers – Cute and inventive platform fun. ***Downers*** – Tougher than Mike Tyson in a suit of armour. With a bazooka. ***The Bottom Line*** – You've got as much chance of finishing it as Wile E. Coyote has of catching Road Runner. ★★★

NINJA REMIX
System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Closer to what *Last Ninja 2* should have been. Extremely high-quality graphics... ***Downers*** – ...hiding a near-terminal lack of gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ideal for game players with dicky hearts, otherwise keep the electro-shock equipment handy for those, er, sedate moments. ★★

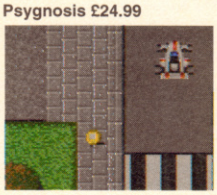
NINJA SPIRIT
Activision £24.99

Uppers – Fast and violent arcade conversion. ***Downers*** – Original was a production-line job, no imagination or sparkle. Awful disk accessing problems. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tedious crap. ★

NINJA WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. ***Downers*** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

NITRO
Psygnosis £24.99



Uppers – Groovy graphics, smooth scrolling, excellent car-handling. ***Downers*** – A practically infinite-credit system means the game has little sense of urgency. You have to guess the course on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Needs more in the way of immediate danger to be addictive, but (unlike many similar games) is as fun in one player mode as with a couple of chums. ★★★

NUCLEAR WAR
US Gold £19.99

Uppers – Interesting cross between *Risk* and *Dictator*. ***Downers*** – Utterly feeble puns, and dubious taste. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very limited game, not really saved by the humour. ★

OBITUS
Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. ***Downers*** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

ONSLAUGHT
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Lovely sound and music; lots of depth. ***Downers*** – Very confusing graphics and gameplay, and the main sequences are technically below the level of your average budget game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Caught between the two stools of wargaming and platform zap games, this isn't a very good example of either. ★★

OOOPS UP
Demonware £24.95

Uppers – Arcade fun in the *Pang*, er, 'tradition'. ***Downers*** – Colossally inferior to the real thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – The excellent sampled music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead. ★★

OPERATION STEALTH
Delphine (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – More of a James Bond feel than any official James Bond game. Not too much disk faffing about either (which makes a change). ***Downers*** – Arcade sequences will irritate the adventure purist. It's also tedious having to examine every pixel of every location by hand. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best game of its type so far. A reasonably friendly operating system and an immense challenge. ★★★★

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. ***Downers*** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

ORIENTAL GAMES
MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Joystick editor makes fighting user-friendly. ***Downers*** – So out-of-date it's wearing flares. ***The Bottom Line*** – Misleading title disguises a standard beat-'em-up. ★★

OVERLANDER
Elite £19.99

Uppers – Better than the official *Road Blasters* conversion. ***Downers*** – Way too easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a patch on the ST version. ★★

PANG
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A perfect arcade conversion; novel two player mode and heaps of addictiveness make it the last word in cute games. ***Downers*** – The long wait between games is a bit of a bind. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'll be blowing bubbles forever. ★★★★★

PARADROID 90
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Nothing compares to *Paradroid* in terms of original gameplay and elegant bas-relief graphics. ***Downers*** – Old C64 games players may be disappointed with the lack of new features. ***The Bottom Line*** – A five year old game idea, and it still wipes the floor with most competition. ★★★★★

PHOTON STORM
ARC £24.99

Uppers – Incredibly frantic blasting experience. ***Downers*** – Not one to buy if you want to show off your shiny new Amiga's snazzy graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're a Minter fan you'll love it. A finely-tuned adrenalin machine. ★★★★

PICK'N'PILE
Ubi Soft £19.99

Uppers – Fascinating mix of *Puzznic* and *Boulder Dash*. ***Downers*** – 8-bit graphics don't help visual clarity any. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not enough variation to sustain it for long. ★★

PIPE MANIA
Empire £24.99

Uppers – Very original, slightly abstract, and deceptively fast-moving for a puzzle game. ***Downers*** – You can feel you've got very little control over matters. ***The Bottom Line*** – Either hooks you from minute one, or goes completely over your head. See it before you buy it. ★★

PIRATES
Microprose £24.95

Uppers – More addictive than this kind of game usually is. ***Downers*** – Calling it a simulation is brass-necking of the first order. ***The Bottom Line*** – Needs more depth to make it really interesting. ★★

THE PLAGUE
Software Business £19.99

Uppers – Lovely pictures. ***Downers*** – Crap sound and frustrating gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not actually awful, but extremely dated. ★

PLAYER MANAGER
Anco £19.95

Uppers – Best mix of football playing and management yet seen. ***Downers*** – Bugged to buggery. All the faults of *Kick Off* and some more besides. ***The Bottom Line*** – When it works, very good indeed. ★★★

PLOTTING
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A novelty – a puzzle game with cute graphics! ***Downers*** – Gets samey after a while, less freedom than other puzzlers makes for a shorter life-span. ***The Bottom Line*** – A charming little game, but eventually dull. ★★★★

POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. ***Downers*** – ie half the game is form-filling. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D isometric graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. ***Downers*** – The icon control system really is very confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – An essential for all open-minded Amiga owners. ★★★★★

POWER DRIFT
Activision £19.99

Uppers – All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. ***Downers*** – The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really that close to the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good stab at a very difficult conversion, but not quite good enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – The brave new face of wargames... ***Downers*** – ...which looks suspiciously like *Populous*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite similarities to a certain other title, *Powermonger* really is an excellent game in its own right. ★★★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. ***Downers*** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PROJECTYLE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Incredibly fast action, lots of depth if you want it and terrifyingly competitive in multi-player mode. ***Downers*** – A bit *too* fast and frantic for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most imaginative future sport yet, and arguably the best. ★★★★

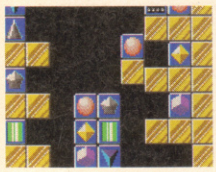
PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH
Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. ***Downers*** – But completely crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

PUZZNIC
Ocean £24.99



Uppers – Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention original. ***Downers*** – Infuriatingly tough on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be put off by the useless graphics, this is a wonderful brain teaser. ★★★★

PYRAMAX
ARC £19.99

Uppers – The 'Generation Game' conveyor-belt screen is funny. ***Downers*** – Hackneyed look and concept, hampered further by awesome slowness. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't waste your time. ★

RAINBOW ISLANDS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Incomparably playable, massively cute. If Winona Ryder was an Amiga game she'd be *Rainbow Islands*. ***Downers*** – Not actually a flawless conversion of the coin-op (no simultaneous two-player mode for example), but who cares? ***The Bottom Line*** – Somewhere over the rainbow there may be another game this good, but it hasn't appeared in *this* office. The best. ★★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE
Anco £19.95

Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. ***Downers*** – Limited lastability. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RANX
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Totally ideologically unsound. ***Downers*** – Totally ideologically unsound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brilliantly-presented but ultimately limited comic strip beat-'em-up. Ideologically unsound. ★★

RED STORM RISING
MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Unbelievably realistic, the best of its kind. ***Downers*** – Almost total lack of moving graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – A strategist's dream, but if you really want a submarine experience this realistic, go join the navy. ★★

RESOLUTION 101
Millenium £24.95

Uppers – Extremely fast, plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Sparse, very basic graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just a little bit too repetitive. ★★★

REVELATION
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Neat idea – a puzzle game based on safe cracking. ***Downers*** – Too complex to just pick up and play – bad news for a puzzler. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless name?) ★★

RICK DANGEROUS 2
MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Cute, colourful, action packed, immensely playable and better paced than *Rick 1*... ***Downers*** – ...but really not all that dissimilar, and still packed with far too much in the way of unforeseeable danger. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loveable. ★★★

RISK
Leisure Genius £19.99

Uppers – Very good translation of the board game, with loads of options, varyingly talented computer players, and the Amiga doing all the tedious calculations. ***Downers*** – Not as much fun without the little plastic armies. ***The Bottom Line*** – The compulsive board game loses nothing in the conversion, and even gains in several aspects. ★★★★

ROBOCOP 2
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great graphics, generally excellent presentation. ***Downers*** – Awkward controls, some infuriating gameplay traits, and it's all a touch too formulaic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a good deal better. ★★★

ROCKET RANGER
Cinemaware £24.99

Uppers – See 'Cinemaware Game Standard Review No.1 (paragraph 334, 'Nice Graphics And Their Usage')' ***Downers*** – See 'Cinemaware Game Standard Review No.1 (paragraph 369, 'Totally Excessive Disk-Swapping And How It Ruins Game Flow')' ***The Bottom Line*** – Has its die-hard fans, but actually finding a game in here can seem a bit tricky sometimes. ★★★

ROGUE TROOPER
Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devious but logical puzzles and an excellent free collectors' comic. ***Downers*** – One life – one mistake and you're all the way back to the start of the first level (Aaarrgh!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun for the persistent, and a good licence for a change. ★★

RORKE'S DRIFT
Impressions £19.99

Uppers – Authentic table-top wargame sim. ***Downers*** – No sound, few options, irritating to play. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very limited (in every sense). ★

ROTOX
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Rotoscape (tm) works very well. ***Downers*** – Crap sound, massively irritating continue system, huge disk-accessing pauses between levels and games. ***The Bottom Line*** – Bolox. ★

SAFARI GUNS
Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – *Operation Wolf* without the violence. ***Downers*** – Sound like a bad idea? ***The Bottom Line*** – It is. ★

SATAN
Dinamic £19.99

Uppers – You won't finish it in a hurry. ***Downers*** – Spookily similar to *Black Tiger*. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'age' in 'average'. ★★

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS
Grandslam £19.99

Uppers – Close conversion with all the usual features. ***Downers*** – Too easy, too similar to every other shoot-'em-up you've ever seen. ***The Bottom Line*** – The words 'bog standard' spring to mind. ★★

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2
Psygnosis £34.95

Uppers – Jaw-dropping graphics, and, er, um... that's it. ***Downers*** – Your first few games will be shorter than the accessing pauses between them. The Roger Dean T-shirt is nauseous. ***The Bottom Line*** – £34.95? Get out of here! ★★

SHADOW WARRIORS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Look, leave me alone, it's close to the arcade game, what else do you want me to say? ***Downers*** – Very tough and completely unrewarding. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's about as much game in here as there is in an empty crate with ' Tomatoes from Greenland' stamped on it. ★

SHANGHAI
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SHERMAN M4
Loriciels £19.99

Uppers – Interesting real-life scenarios, and less techie than some tank sims. ***Downers*** – Not hugely involving. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very limited 1990 *Battlezone*. ★★

SHOCKWAVE
Digital Magic £24.99

Uppers – Lightning fast arcade quality *Afterburner/Star Wars* graphics. ***Downers*** – Tactical sections get in the way. ***The Bottom Line*** – A potentially great arcade monster shoot-'em-up ruined by trying to be brainy as well. ★★★

SIMULCRA
MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Mad, frantic 3D blast. ***Downers*** – Not much brain-expanding involved. ***The Bottom Line*** – An amphetamine classic. ★★★

SIRIUS 7
CRL £24.99

Uppers – Technically adequate. ***Downers*** – No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as action-packed as *Xenon 2*. In pause mode. ★

SKI OR DIE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***Downers*** – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, patchy collection of unimpressive sub games. ★

SPACE ROGUE
Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – Well packaged, fairly playable. ***Downers*** – Seen *Elite*? You've seen this. Far too many controls. ***The Bottom Line*** – So like *Elite* it's practically criminal, but nowhere near as good. ★

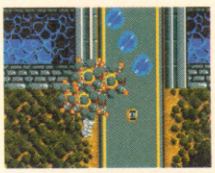
SPEEDBALL II
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers*** – Teams can be hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy or die. ★★★★★

SPELLBOUND
Psyclapse £24.99

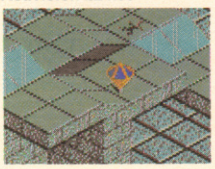
Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME
Domark £24.99



Uppers – Lovely tiny graphics, tough gameplay that nonetheless rewards a bit of effort. ***Downers*** – Only half-a-dozen levels – all completable after some practice – means it won't last all that long. ***The Bottom Line*** – Easily the best Bond game so far, and a fun *Spy Hunter* clone into the bargain, though not something you'll play for months. ★★★

SPINDIZZY WORLDS
Activision £24.99



Uppers – Another example of an 8-bit classic brought bang up to date with a sprawling play area and loads of new features. ***Downers*** – Bizarre controls to get to grips with and the graphics could be better. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superlative game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece. ★★★★★

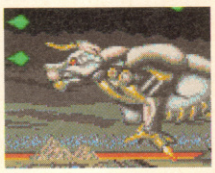
STARGLIDER II
Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Instant 3D blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. ***Downers*** – Slightly too repetitive in the long-term. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best *Star Wars*-inspired releases on the Amiga. ★★★

STARBLADE
Palace £24.99

Uppers – Original concept. ***Downers*** – Sod all sound-wise, technically nothing to shout about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Run-of-the-mill. ★★

ST. DRAGON
Storm £24.99



Uppers – Lovely graphics, a helpful software autofire option, and a challenging difficulty curve lift this out of the morass of horizontal zappers. The Dynamic Loading System is an infinitely wonderful idea. ***Downers*** – A bit too tough for most, and the power-ups are unexciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the few sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-ups that you really should own. ★★★★

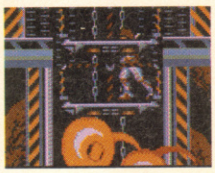
STORM ACROSS EUROPE
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Playing the baddies makes a change. ***Downers*** – Takes ages to get into, and the graphics are primitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too ambitious for its own good. ★

STREET HOCKEY
Gonzo Games £24.99

Uppers – Um...the *Frogger*-style sub-game is...um...not bad, probably. ***Downers*** – Mind-bogglingly unplayable, completely confusing, technically inept. Generally useless all round. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupendously dire. Utter trash. Appalling crap. Not that good at all, really. ★

STRIDER 2
US Gold £24.99



Uppers – Good animation and plenty of challenge. ***Downers*** – Very little advance on *Strider*, and shoddily presented. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's everything that's bad about sequels, and bears all the hallmarks of a rush job. ★★

STUN RUNNER
Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Er...the music isn't entirely crap. ***Downers*** – Hopelessly slow, graphically primitive, terminal lack of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – We'd rather see a great conversion of *Galaxians* than someone make a pig's ear of a game they knew they couldn't convert in the first place. ★

SUPERLEAGUE SOCCER
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Well-implemented strategy sections. ***Downers*** – 'Revolutionary' control system is useless in practice. ***The Bottom Line*** – Crap footballing action leaves this one lagging behind the competition by 20,000 leagues. ★

SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Flawless arcade conversion. ***Downers*** – The track sequence is silly (four of the first eight races are on track 1), the difficulty curve is steep, and control is a tad over-sensitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – The Amiga's best *Super Sprint* game, but with some niggles that stop it being the true classic it might have been. ★★★★

SUPER SKWEEK
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Manic, silly, touching, very French. ***Downers*** – Not as endearing as the original *Skweek*. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Pac Man* for complete and utter lunatics. ★★★

SUPER WONDER BOY
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers*** – Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

SUPREMACY
Virgin £29.99

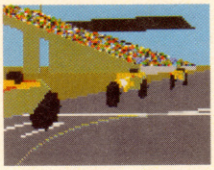
Uppers – Galactic empire-building with some smart graphics. ***Downers*** – The number based gameplay renders it all completely uninteresting. ***The Bottom Line*** – For accountants and gullible people only. ★★

SWIV
Storm £24.99

Uppers – Looks good, sounds good, comes with a neat two-player option – and all in one (massive) level too! ***Downers*** – There aren't any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). ***The***

Bottom Line – Frantic – one of the best shoot-'em-ups we've seen. ★★★★★

TEAM SUZUKI
Gremlin £24.99



Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views. Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TEAM YANKEE
Empire £29.99

Uppers – The action slant on the standard tank sim makes it more immediate and accessible... ***Downers*** – ...but what a pity it lacks depth and excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't work as a strategy sim or arcade blast. ★★

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – It doesn't have the word 'Ninja' in the title... ***Downers*** – ...but even that doesn't save it from being utterly awful in every way. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun playing with a real turtle. Or a real mutant. ★

TENNIS CUP
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Great sampled sound, split screen is a good idea. ***Downers*** – Terrible pause between pressing fire and anything happening. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very good tennis sim, but nothing remarkable. ★★★

THEIR FINEST HOUR
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Captures the flavour of WWII. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics, no detail, pretty slow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loads of options will keep you at it almost as long as the real war. ★★★

THEME PARK MYSTERY
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it. ★★

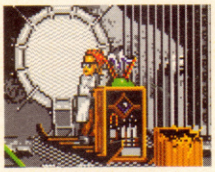
THUNDERSTRIKE
Millenium £24.99

Uppers – *Defender* for the 3D generation. ***Downers*** – An absolute PC classic, so why is the Amiga conversion so appalling? ***The Bottom Line*** – A seriously average game which could have been an absolute gem. *Thunderstrike*? More like *Chunderstrike*. ★★

TIE BREAK
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – More of a simulation than a *Pong* game. ***Downers*** – Whoever thought up the 'scrolling court' idea should be shot. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hideously complex control makes this one more hassle than it's worth. ★★

THE TIME MACHINE
Activision £24.99



Uppers – It's nice to play a game that doesn't have 10,000 screens for a change. ***Downers*** – Gets frustrating having to do everything ten times. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too clever by half. ★★

TIME SOLDIER
Electrocoin £24.99

Uppers – Fair graphically, plenty of action. ***Downers*** – Bad conversion, repetitive gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Poor quality, overpriced rush-job. ★

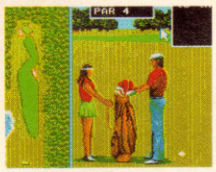
TORVAK THE WARRIOR
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful, gloomy graphics. ***Downers*** – Incredibly slow and unremarkable *Rastan* game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unresponsive control and a talentless hero cripple the gameplay. ★

TOTAL RECALL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. No feel for the movie. (And couldn't they afford the rights to use Arnie's real face?) ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF
Elite £24.99



Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama. ★★

TOWER FRA
Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Yes, you guessed it, it's an air traffic control tower simulation. Not as boring as it sounds. ***Downers*** – It's still fairly boring though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good training for the next generation of air traffic controllers. ★★

TOYOTA CELICA RALLY
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very impressively detailed – a lot of effort has been taken to get an authentic feel here. ***Downers*** – Be prepared to dig deep to find the actual game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps too good a simulation to be much fun to play. ★★

TOWER OF BABEL
MicroStatus £24.99

Uppers – Highly cerebral, but not lacking in action (well, not totally lacking). The VCR-style control panel is an intriguing, and actually adds to the game. ***Downers*** – A bit slow-paced most of the time. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing, enthralling; a damn fine game. ★★★

TREASURE TRAP
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Graphics convey well the feel of being in a rusting hulk underwater. Adds an arcade adventure element to the *Knight Lore* genre. ***Downers*** – Very sluggish play with an unhelpful diagonal joystick system. Horribly confusing perspective, even for the game type. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun, but only because *Head Over Heels* hasn't made it to the Amiga. ★★★

TURN IT
Kingsoft £19.99

Uppers – Interesting *Shanghai* variant. ***Downers*** – Not for the visually-impaired. ***The Bottom Line*** – Intriguing and pretty. Well worth checking out. ★★★

TURRICAN
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Exceptional playability, and some great weapons. ***Downers*** – Sprawling layout of levels means the game can become unfocussed. If your joystick hasn't got autofire, forget it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just too big, and having the 'continue' send you right back to the start of a (huge) level doesn't help any. ★★★

TURRICAN 2
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

TUSKER
System 3 (Activision) £24.99

Uppers – Nothing actually wrong with it. ***Downers*** – Nothing new. Nothing interesting. Just nothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Depressingly average. ★★

TV SPORTS: BASKETBALL
Cinemaware £29.99

Uppers – Usual Cinemaware presentation and graphics. ***Downers*** – Usual outrageous price. ***The Bottom Line*** – No gameplay and poor control make this a terrible buy. ★

ULTIMA V
Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond any other role-playing adventures, even previous Ultima releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight, and some may find the size of the game just too daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy (at least until *Ultima VI* comes along). ★★★★★

ULTIMATE GOLF
Gremlin £24.95

Uppers – Very accurate. ***Downers*** – The curious graphic style is distracting, and the sound is dire. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting and realistic golf sim, but unlikely to fare well against the competition. ★★★

ULTIMATE RIDE
Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Realistic handling. ***Downers*** – Dreadful gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another failed attempt at the simulation accuracy/fun game balance. ★★

UNREAL
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Looks very striking, nice variation in gameplay too. ***Downers*** – The absurd 'save game' feature spoils things a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – A cut above your average hack-'em-up. ★★★

VAXINE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful-looking, original and imaginative shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Very, very, very (very) hard. ***The Bottom Line*** – Be prepared to tear your hair out. ★★★★

VECTOR CHAMPIONSHIP RUN
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – Pretty speedy. ***Downers*** – Uncontrollable. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's the point in a game you can't play? (c.f. Rhetorical Questions For Journalists, Vol. 1) ★

VENUS THE FLYTRAP
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Pretty colour-graduated backgrounds and excellent animation. The *P-47*-esque bonus round gives variation. ***Downers*** – Lacking in challenge for the first few levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but palls fairly quickly. ★★

VOODOO NIGHTMARE
Palace £24.99

Uppers – Clear, sharp graphics. ***Downers*** – Maddeningly sensitive controls. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice change – an average game. ★★

WARHEAD
Activision £24.99

Uppers – A bit like *Elite* without all the boring trading bits. ***Downers*** – A bit like *Elite* without all the interesting trading bits. ***The Bottom Line*** – Worth a look. ★★★

WEB OF TERROR
Impressions £19.99

Uppers – Animation is good. ***Downers*** – Totally frustrating. Duff graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost unplayable; not impressive in any way. ★

WELLTRIS
Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – The kind of game people spend decades playing. ***Downers*** – If you didn't like *Tetris*, don't even think about it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as simple as its predecessor, but nearly as addictive. ★★★

WILDLIFE
MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water. ***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WINGS
Cinemaware £29.99

Uppers – Authentic WW1 feel. ***Downers*** – Ludicrous disk swapping. Very little gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far too simple for a sim, and too expensive for what it is. ★★

WINGS OF DEATH
Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Range of power-ups is good, even including power-downs! ***Downers*** – Not the most innovative game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as much fun as *Xenon 2*, though not as pretty. ★★★

WINGS OF FURY
Broderbund (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Elements of flight simulation bring a little depth to the action, and the graphics have a lot of character. ***Downers*** – Is that all there is? ***The Bottom Line*** – Strongly reminiscent of budget STOS game *Skystrike*, with 8-bit graphics and not much to recommend it. ★★

WIPE OUT
Gonzo Games £19.99

Uppers – Highly tactical game with loads of excitement too. ***Downers*** – A light cycles game in 1990 is hardly the peak of innovation (in fact it wasn't even the peak of innovation in 1980). ***The Bottom Line*** – Poor graphics, sound (and most everything else) but a fun game. ★★★

WOLFPACK
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Very deep (ho ho). ***Downers*** – Sub sims never score highly on the thrillometer, and this one is no exception. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as overly techie-biased as many in the genre, but still not one to recommend to the hardened action junkies. ★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. ★★

WRATH OF THE DEMON
Readysoft £29.99

Uppers – Cheaper than *Shadow Of The Beast II*. ***Downers*** – Almost exactly the same in every other respect. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *S.O.T.B.II* you'll already have bought it, so you won't need this. Otherwise a good alternative. ★★

XENOMORPH
Pandora £24.99

Uppers – Lots of lasting appeal, lots of depth. ***Downers*** – Very big, perhaps too big. ***The Bottom Line*** – Let down by weak sound, but still pretty good stuff. ★★

XIPHOS
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

YOLANDA
Millenium £24.99

Uppers – Racy soundtrack. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics make the pixel-perfect positioning required very hard to pull off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just too hard. ★

ZARATHRUSTA
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – A budget game selling for £25? ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but not good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX
The Software Business £24.99

Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – God, but it's hard! ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. ★★

Z-OUT
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – A huge improvement on *X-Out*. ***Downers*** – The horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with knobs on thing has already been done to death. ***The Bottom Line*** – A better *R-Type* than *R-Type*, but it isn't different enough. ★★★

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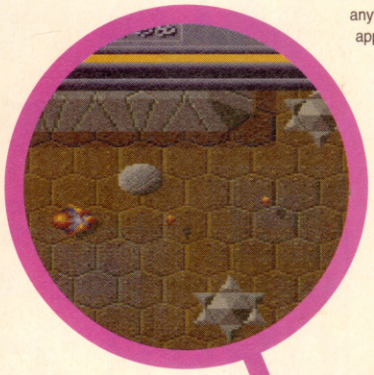
IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

PETER MOLYNEUX'S first game was a mail order business sim in the '*Rock Star Ate My Hamster*' mould which sold an astounding... two copies. It didn't put him off though, which has proved to be good news for gamesplayers – his current Bullfrog outfit has been consistently innovative, and in *Populous* came up with one of the landmark Amiga games. But, looking backwards, what does he really think of his back catalogue now..?



FUSION

THIS WAS THE FIRST ORIGINAL TITLE we worked on as Bullfrog and must be one of the slowest and most tedious games ever released on the Amiga. It had a tiny, tiny little screen, it didn't use the Amiga colour palate properly – in fact, I'm sure Electronic Arts can send you lots of copies if you want because they're desperate to get rid of it.

The problem was that we really wrote the game so that we could learn how to animate on the Amiga properly – we had no great regard for the gameplay at all. It scrolled in eight directions, which was fine except you never knew which one you were meant to go in, and the aliens were very basic in their movements – they'd just shoot away regardless. It just wasn't balanced, probably because we'd hardly playtested it at all.

At the time we already knew we wanted to do other sorts of game, and this wasn't what we were into at all. E.A. thought it was sort of okay though – I mean, we are talking three years ago, and though *Xenon* had just come out there wasn't really much else that was good to compare it with.

I STILL THINK THIS IS A VERY GOOD GAME – occasionally people still play it in the office, which has to be a good sign. It had a few flaws in the gameplay of course, but they're proving to be pretty easily corrected in the sequel. The main thing we were suffering from at the time was not understanding how to get everything running as fast as it should. It was all written in C which is incredibly wasteful.

Looking at it now I guess the graphics could have been better, but the main problem was the speed. If you get a lot of people on a landscape everything slows down to the pace of a slug. You can get to a certain stage in a game where you can be damn sure you're going to win, but you have to battle your way through to the end of that world anyway. Tedious stuff.

We're doing *Populous 2* now, which we've got running much faster – at about twice the speed of *Xenon 2* in fact, which is incredible but really too fast. We're actually having to slow it down. It's got some animated sequences in it too, which *Populous* should have had.

The way you really learn how to improve things is just by playing them. We're playing the new *Populous* in the office constantly at the moment and we're learning more from that than anything else. Though in many ways it'll appear similar on the surface we're not actually taking any code from the original at all – it's all brand new.

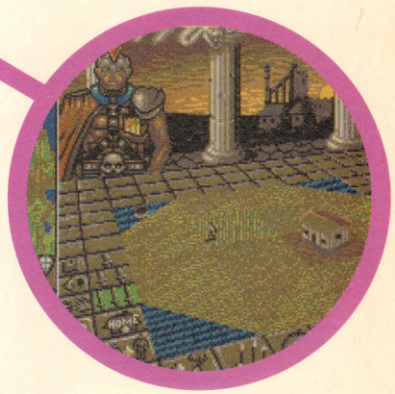
POPULOUS

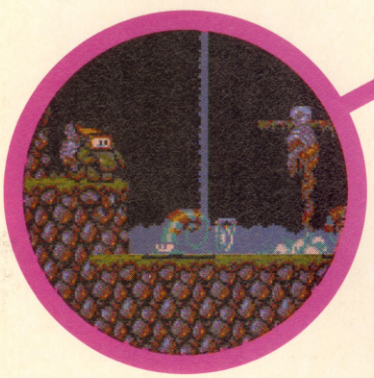
I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED this to have been better than it was (the control was cumbersome and not intuitive enough) but I'm still very pleased with it. I know there are little things in there that nobody's found yet just waiting to be discovered. Happily we're now doing the data disks where we've got a chase to cure all the things I feel are wrong with it.

The worst thing was that we were under incredible pressure to get the game finished by Christmas, so a few features that should have been more polished weren't. The most difficult thing really was not making it too much like *Populous* – people didn't want it to be *Populous 2*, so in some ways we went out of our way to be different.

I don't think this is as good as *Populous*, mainly because I think *Populous* is more enjoyable for more people. I think I could sit anybody who likes games down in front of *Populous*, and after spending a bit of time explaining how it works to them I think they'd not only enjoy playing it, they'd want to go off and play it some more off their own bat. I'm not sure it's the same with *Powermonger*.

POWERMONGER





FLOOD

THIS WAS THE FIRST GAME Sean Cooper did – he started out as a games tester but has since moved on to be a programmer, which is how things seem to work with us. If you ask Sean now he'd tell you he still likes the game, but I think he'd like a chase to do it all again so he could get it right this time.

It's a game that has lots of original ideas in it, but the problem is they're not developed enough. Not enough thought went into laying out the levels, giving the graphics more variety and so on – I think all the elements are there but they're just not tied together properly. This is one game that I think could have been a lot better than it was. As an example, there's actually one baddie with his code and graphics all sorted out and everything who just never appears in the game at any point. He's there in the program just waiting to come on and he doesn't – there's no real excuse for something like that, it's just incompetence.

At the moment Sean is working on a title called *Bob* for the end of the year. I think it has the potential to be the best thing Bullfrog has ever produced, though it's quite hard to describe in the same way that *Populous* was hard to describe before anybody actually saw it. There's no real pigeon-hole to put it in.

THE FUTURE

WELL, THERE'S *POPULOUS 2* in the late summer, the *Powermonger* data disks of course, *Bob* before Christmas hopefully and then another game called *Creation*, which I can't tell you too much about except that it's to do with genetic engineering, early next year. We're more in control of release schedules now which is a good thing – I never want to relive the *Powermonger* experience again.

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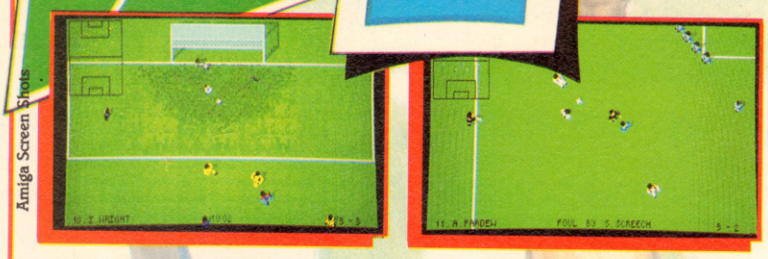
Software for the Nintendo, Sega, PC, Atari ST, Lynx, and Gameboy also available.

All software/hardware is subject to availability. Titles not available will be sent on day of release.

£1.00 P&P on software
Up to £5 P&P on hardware

KICK OFF 2

A NEW DI
SOCCER SI



- BLISTERING PACE
- PIXEL PERFECT PASSING
- SUPERB TACTICAL GAMEPLAY

KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the THE GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

* **Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.**
* **1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)**
* **2 players TEAM option against the computer or 2 other players. Hundreds of players each with a unique combination of attributes (stamina, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)**
* **Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and do sliding tackles.**
* **Set piece. FREE KICKS including dummies and the ability to dip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.**
* **9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short throw ins.**
* **Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and a choice of tactics.**
* **League and cup competitions with Extra Time, Injury Time and sudden death penalty shoot outs.**
* **Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc.(Excl. IBM & CBM 64)**
* **Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.**
* **Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.**

ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
AMIGA USER INT - The best computer game ever **97%**
THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. **96%**
THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Buy, Buy. **930.**
AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. **94%**
ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. **90%**
C & VG - Championship winning material. **95%**
GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. **92%**
COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. **90%**
AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. **93%**
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - Nothing short of brilliant.
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Computer football event of the year.

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AMIGA & ST £19.99 EXP. AMIGA £24.99
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An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple **-Bring Back The Glory Days.**

His success depends on his playing skills on the pitch and managerial skills in devising winning tactics, aquiring the right players from the transfer market and building a team worthy of the highest honours.

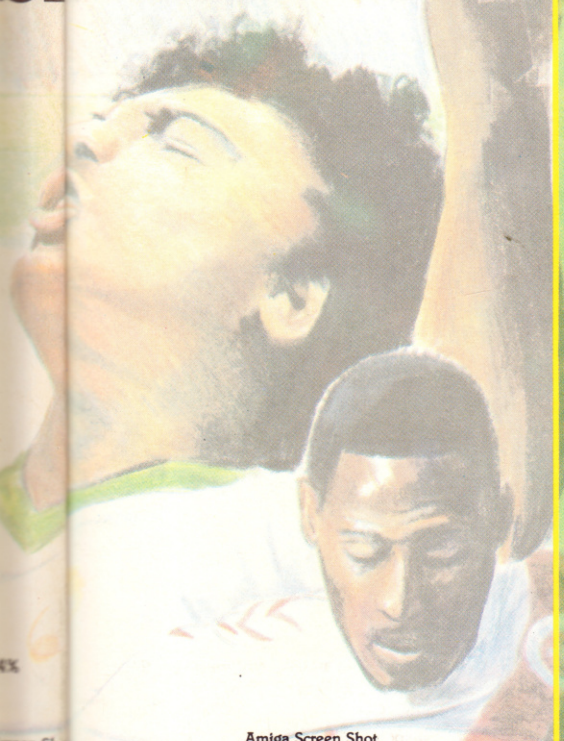
* **Unique facility to design and implement your own tactics.**
* **Over 1000 individual players, each with a unique combination of attributes and skills.**
* **A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.**
* **4 division league and a cup tournament with sudden death penalty shoot out.**

The Player Manager brings the every day realities of a manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player, his triumphs and his failures into a sharp FOCUS.

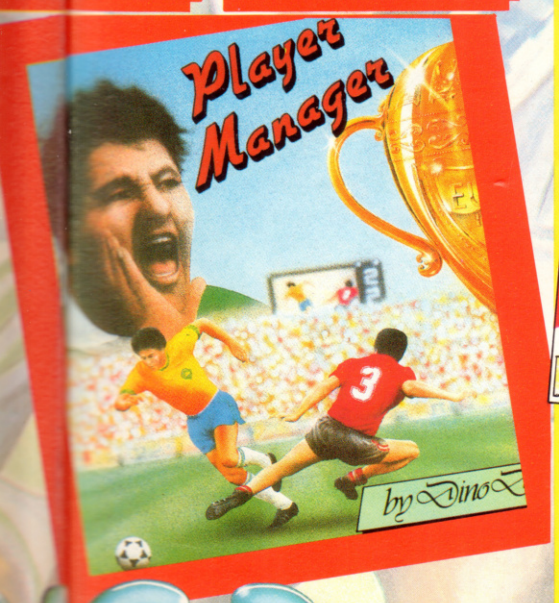
ST. ACTION - A stroke of pure genius.
THE ONE - An exceptional football management simulation, Astounding depth. Most involved, rewarding and playable.
THE ACE - Successfully blends challenging soccer management with frantic end to end arcade action. **920**
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definitive management game.
COMMODORE USER - At last a management game that requires true management skills - a winner. **94%**
ST FORMAT - Brilliant. **93%**
AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive. **93%**
ZZAP - Best football management game ever written. **92%**

AMIGA - ST £19.99

DIMENSION IN SIMULATIONS



Amiga Screen Shot



THE FINAL WHISTLE
Amiga - ST £12.99

Raises the skills required and gameplay of KICK OFF 2 to new heights.

Two extra kits.
Look at any player stats. (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.

Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.

Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.

Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blinding header or a spectacular overhead kick.

New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.

Linesmen and referee on the pitch. (EXP. Amiga Only).

A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.

4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

And Lot's More

WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - February.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.

RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - April.) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.

GIANTS OF EUROPE (June) Best teams of Europe on one disc.

SUPER LEAGUE - Four division league with 24 teams in each division. Automatic promotions and relegations. Teams from GIANTS OF EUROPE can be loaded into 1st Division.

Draft specifications. Subject to changes without notice

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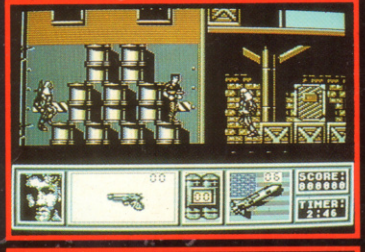

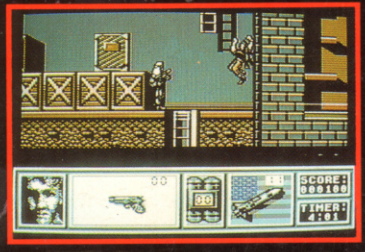

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NEXT MONTH!

Amiga Power No 2 (which comes complete with a copy of KID GLOVES lovingly stuck to the front cover) will be 'hitting' the streets on May 23rd! Once again it'll contain more (incredibly strict and harsh) reviews than you'll find in any other Amiga magazine, more famous industry type people saying outrageous things that'll get them (and quite possibly us) in a lot of trouble, ground-breaking tips straight from the horse's mouth (ie the programmers told us) and more!